



CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN MAN

The Religious Demand Upon Society:
A Study of the Prophetic Tradition

Part 2

II. The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition
in the Reformation

The second and third of three lectures by

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III. Prophetic Insights Today

Four lectures by

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THE RELIGIOUS DEMAND UPON SOCIETY:
A STUDY OF
THE PROPHETIC TRADITION
(Course VII)

Part 2

II. The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition
in the Reformation

The second and third of three lectures by
the Rev. Paul J. Tillich, Th.D.

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C O N T E N T S

II. THE RECOVERY OF THE PROPHETIC TRADITION IN THE REFORMATION		
The second and third of three lectures by Dr. Tillich		Page
THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT		56
Our Separation and Our Servitude: The Correlation of God and Man; The Ruin of the Self; Luther's Concept of Sin; The Unity of Soul and Body; The Divine Attack; The Doctrine of Human Servitude ... The New Reality: Faith Is the Gift of Grace; The Paradoxical Character of Faith; The Lutheran and Calvinist Views of Human Existence.		
THE NEW COMMUNITY		66
The Reformers' Understanding of the Church ... Spirit and Authority: Luther's "Testimony of the Holy Spirit"; Calvin's "Document of Truth" ... Faith and Organization ... The Prophetic Word and Priestly Symbolism ... The Ultimate Concern and the Life of Society: Luther's Doctrine of the State; Zwingli's View; Calvin's Theocratic Idea of the State ... The Dynamic Polarity of Protestantism.		
III. PROPHETIC INSIGHTS TODAY		
Three lectures by Dr. Stanley and one by Dr. Mollegen		
THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL		76
Introduction: The Ruling of God; The Recovery of the Term ... The Development of Millenarianism in America: "The Sovereignty of God"; "The Reign of Christ"; "The Kingdom on Earth"; The Rise of the Millenarian Hope ... The Social Gospel: Walter Rauschenbusch; "Christianizing the Social Order"; "A Theology for the Social Gospel" ... The Application of the Idea of the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine in Detail.		
THE PROPHETIC CHARACTER OF MARXISM (the Rev. A.T. Mollegen, S.T.M., D.D.)		87
Introduction--The Unity of Communism ... Three Sources of Marxism: Biblical Christianity as a General Climate; Hegel's Rationalization of Christianity; Apocalyptic Propheticism and the Western Dream; The Three Ages; The Western Dream--Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity ... A Christian Criticism: No God, No Sin, No Final Salvation.		
PROPHETIC ASPECTS OF MODERN THOUGHT		102
Our Belief in the Meaningfulness of History: The Greek Preoccupation with Nature; The Transparency of Events for the Prophets; God's Grasp of History ... Our Critical Attitude Toward Life: The Quest of Modern Man; Man as Judge; "Thus Saith the Lord" ... Our Perception of Man's Radical Wrongness: Marxist Ideology; "The Evil Imagination of the Heart"; God Is the Judge ... Our Hope in the Future: The Historical Background; The Illusion of Temporal Fulfillment; the Arm of the Lord; "A Time After Time" ... The Divine Causality: God's Immanent Activity; God's Transcendent Activity; The Lord of All.		
A PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PRESENT HOUR		117
Introduction ... Two Crises in American History: The Civil War; The Last War ... Two Opposing World Powers: To Bridge the Gap; The Choice of Weapons; The Situation Confronting the President; Our Hour of Darkness ... A Prophetic Analysis: Is There a Meaning? What Judgment Is Before Us? Our Salvation; Can We Hope? God Will Fulfill.		

19 November 1950

I I. The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation

(Continued)

The second and third of three lectures by the Rev. Paul J. Tillich, Th.D.

THE HUMAN PREDICAMENT

The subject of these lectures, "The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation", was discussed a week ago in connection with the idea of God. At that time I said that whenever prophetic attack was leveled against society or Church, it was in the name of God and in connection with the distortion of the idea of God either in secularism or in the Church.

Our Separation and Our Servitude

The Correlation of God and Man	But whenever an idea of God is enunciated, it is always in correlation with an interpretation of man, and vice versa. You could talk about God without talking of man only if God were an object beside others, but that is exactly what all prophetic religion denies. You can never talk about him except in the situation of correlation with him.
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This was strongly expressed by Calvin in the introduction to his great dogmatic work (in some ways the greatest Protestantism has ever produced), The Institutes, in which he says that the content of all wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of oneself. But this knowledge of oneself also is not a theoretical doctrine of man; it is not a doctrine of man in which we can speak about man in a detached way--in a way in which man becomes one object beside others, in terms of ordinary psychology or sociology. When the Reformers--and all prophets--speak of man, when they speak of human misery, the correlation between the knowledge of God and knowledge of man is the correlation between the divine majesty and the human misery. It is neither a theoretical doctrine of God nor a theoretical doctrine of man; but it is the double experience--divine majesty and human misery.

Calvin says: "The miserable ruin into which we have been plunged by the defection of the first man compels us to raise our eyes towards heaven, not only as hungry and famished to seek thence fulfillment of our wants, but as in fear to learn humility." In other words, he says we seek God not only in the desire to be fulfilled, to overcome the desires of our finitude; but on the contrary, our relationship to God includes fear and humility. The idea of God in Calvin, and in all prophetic tradition, is not the correlate of our desires, but the object of our humility. God is not derived from us, because he stands against us. This is a criticism of all attempts by psychologists and sociologists to attribute the idea of God to human desires.

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The Ruin of the Self The converse is also described by Calvin when he describes the human situation. He says: "In the light of this idea of God we are able to look at ourselves." Nobody--not even Luther--has expressed the human situation with more sharpness, more radicalism, and more pessimism than Calvin. Nothing is left of the Renaissance idea of "the creative man". He says: "If we compare God with ourselves, he must be our judge. Men want to avoid the judgment, and we can do so only if we look solely at the world; for as long as our views are bounded by the earth, perfectly content with our own righteousness, wisdom, and strength, we fondly flatter ourselves and fancy we are little less than demigods. But if we elevate our minds to God, what we thought virtue in ourselves, under the pretext of righteousness, will soon be known as the greatest iniquity. What strangely deceived us under the title of wisdom will be despised as extreme folly; and more, what was the appearance of strength will be proved to be most wretched impotence."

The appearance of the divine means the ruin of our self-consciousness. This ruin of our self-consciousness is what all the Reformers proclaimed. The most shining becomes the most sordid in the view of the divine purity. We cannot endure this, because from our natural proneness to hypocrisy any vain appearance of righteousness abundantly contents us instead of the reality. Man (this is the contention of the Reformers, and in this they are all alike) is unrealistic because he cannot stand his own reality. Man continually produces idols (as we heard last week), or, as we say today, ideologies, or rationalizations. He cannot stand his own reality; he has to look away.

(An interesting situation in the light of the history of realism in the modern world is that, in contrast to idealism, realism largely comes from the Reformers' stand against all wrong ideologies. It is not by chance that the neo-Reformation theology of today, as represented by Karl Barth and others, uses the term "realism" and fights against idealism much more than against materialism or atheism.) To the Reformers, the real enemy is idealism, for they felt that man is by nature idealistic about himself, producing ideologies and therefore idols.

Now we must ask, why is man in such a state? It certainly cannot be his original state, because his original state is created goodness. But man has become, as Calvin says, "a sad ruin". He cannot boast about his essential perfection, as the Renaissance man does; for, Calvin asks, what is that original condition from which we are fallen? It is the dignity of man that we have lost. And Calvin said that during exactly the same years in which we have the great hymns about the dignity of man by the Renaissance philosophers.

This depravity embraces all parts and functions of man. Calvin says: "We cannot escape this world of misery which is in man by saying that it refers to our flesh alone, and not to our soul or spirit." Against the Catholic doctrine of the negation of the flesh, Calvin speaks of the totality of the distortion. He says that what the human spirit thinks and acts is mere vanity, that it is distorted and confused, that the human heart is an abyss of horrible confusion. Then he says the following words, which horrify you as they horrify me, but which nevertheless have conquered a large part of the world:

"Let us hold this, then, as an undoubted truth, which no opposition can shake: that the mind of man is so completely alienated from the righteousness of God that it conceives desires and undertakes everything that is impious, perverse, base, impure, and flagitious; that man's heart is so thoroughly infected by the poison of sin that it cannot produce anything but that which is corrupt; and that if at any time men do anything apparently good, yet the mind always remains involved in hypocrisy and fallacious obliquity and the heart enslaved by the inward perverseness."

These words certainly mean the end of the dignity of man, the end of the idea of the creative man, the end of human nature as the center of nature and as the saving power in and above nature.

Luther's Concept of Sin But into the deepest roots of the Reformation doctrine of man we are led again by Luther, for here the religious point of view has been made in the most decisive and the clearest way. The first question Luther asks is, "How can we know sin?" Here he shows, as always, his profound psychoanalytical view of man; he has a real analytic knowledge (if "analysis" means going into the deeper levels). He says: "One cannot know sin directly, because in order to know the negative we must know the positive. And the positive is the communion with God by his justifying act and our receiving faith." Therefore the real sin is the refusal of the gift of God, or, as Luther calls it, unbelief. He says, "Unbelief is the sin altogether."

This word, "Unbelief is the sin altogether", is one of the most revolutionary words which have ever been said, if we understand it rightly. It does not mean that we are sinful if we don't believe in unbelievable things, but it means that separation from God is sin, in the singular and not in the plural; that there is only one sin, namely, unbelief, in the sense of separation from God; and that therefore sin is not a special moral failure, but that there are ultimately no "sins" but only this one sin, namely, separation. That is what he calls unbelief.

So we can say, nothing justifies except faith, and nothing makes sinful except unbelief. The main right is faith, and the main wrong is unbelief. Therefore the word "sin" includes what we are living and doing, apart from faith.

This definition of sin excludes the quantitative and relative distinctions between mortal and venial sins, between heavy and light sins. These distinctions are made from the point of view of morals, from the point of view of the natural law, but they do not mean anything with God. Each and every thing that separates us from God is of equal weight; it has the same qualitative character. Therefore our life as a whole, our nature and our substance, are corrupted; our whole being, not only one part, is determined by sin.

Luther teaches that all those special acts we do which we call "sins" are the fruits of a radical and hidden power of sin. He calls this by the traditional term of original or radical or principal sin, the source of all the others. It was called at that time "concupiscentia"; perhaps today what Freud has called "libido" comes nearest to it. It is the direction of the will of man towards himself, and it is an always acting and

driving force. It is never without our will because man, according to Luther, is essentially will. Never to be overcome by ourselves, it is a tyrant in us, although it does not come from our created nature.

The Unity of Soul and Body And this concerns our whole nature. "The whole man," Luther says, "is spirit and flesh." Man does not consist of two parts; every cell of our body is spirit, and every thought of our mind is flesh. "Flesh" does not refer to a special part of us, but describes the turning away from God, while "spirit" describes the turning towards God. In this sense Luther can even speak of two total men: the man who is totally, including his mind and spirit (which is more or less his cultural life), flesh--that means, subdued to the structures of evil; and then the other man, who is, including his body and his soul and his mind, totally spirit, and who therefore turns toward God. What Luther fights against is a dualistic anthropology (in technical words)--a doctrine of man in which man is built up in different parts.

For Luther there is no rational position above our existential situation of unbelief and concupiscence; to turn away from God is to turn to the world and to the self. This refers to the will as well as to knowledge; we are not free to turn to God and to know him. "Our natural powers with respect to God are completely corrupt", he says. With respect to God, no neutral acts are possible; even at their best, they are evil since the standard for human perfection is not obedience to moral laws, but obedience to the one Law--namely, the full and voluntary love towards God.

"Even he who has received his grace is not free from the power of this corruption, which can be overcome only in a gradual process and which demands life-repentance and penitence. Even the Christian cannot say of himself that he loves God with a full love so that he does what God does voluntarily, as his own will, in freedom and with joy." And this is the criterion: "Enforced obedience is not fulfillment of the divine law; only voluntary acceptance of the divine will is fulfillment of the divine law." This is the ultimate criterion. Any enforced obedience to the law is not based on faith (which is defined as "communion with God"), and therefore it is an expression of our sin, and nothing else.

I would say that this is a trans-moral, ecstatic idea of sin. I know of no one, except perhaps Paul, in whom is so completely expressed, and so powerfully, the idea that sin is not a moralistic concept, not a concept with respect to the Law, but a religious concept--namely, the lack of communion with the source of our being. Therefore, according to Luther, sin goes into the realm of nature; and although he expresses this in half-mythological terms, I would say that he is much more modern in this respect than any of the idealistic philosophers between his day and ours. He says: "I believe that the natural senses also are corrupted, and that the body is distorted in senses, blood, and nerves." According to him, Adam had another sense-intuition before the Fall; and the nature of man, as Luther finds him physiologically and psychologically, is as it is not through necessity of creation or through natural law, but through corruption of the original law of nature and creation.

This unity of soul and body with respect to sin is one of the most important concepts in the Reformation which we should recover. It destroys

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the "moralism of consciousness" as our recent psychological development in the last fifty years has destroyed the psychology of consciousness by the rediscovery of the unconscious. In the same way, for Luther, it is always the whole man which is in sin or in salvation.

The Universality of Sin.-- Since the living substance is perverted, all men, through their origin from the living substance of the human species, are sinful, according to Luther. Here another very modern idea is expressed in religious and partly legendary and mythological terms, namely, the idea that sin and salvation are not matters of the isolated individual, but that we are all bound together. This concept, whatever the psychological term for it may be (as, for example, "collective unconscious"), is much nearer to the Reformation theology than any philosophy, psychology, or ethics of consciousness.

Luther says (following Augustine in this): "Mankind is a 'massa peccatrix'"--a mass which is sinful, a sinful whole. This is so not because of the sexual act--this act as such is not sinful, although it too is corrupted as are all human acts--but because it is the human nature in every man which is corrupted. In this sense sin is universal. It is a divine decree, but a decree which we accept willingly--through our will. Luther says about this most difficult problem: "I am generated in vice, and did not assent. But now the vices are made my own, since now I know that I act against the Law. Now sin is my sin, approved by my will, and accepted by my consent."

This means that Luther sees that the two elements, in all of these considerations, must be the universal structure of human existence on the one hand, and responsible freedom on the other hand. This is the reality in which we are living; and if a rationalist says this is contradictory, then I would simply ask him to read the Greek tragedians. He would find that these people knew exactly the same situation: the curse on the one hand, the responsibility on the other hand; and both united in a way which cannot be described in terms of our ordinary language.

The Divine Attack But Luther goes beyond this. He has his own mythology--taken from the tradition, of course, but strengthened and expressed in a much more powerful way. He takes his symbols from the idea of the satanic kingdom on the one hand, and the wrath of God on the other hand. In this idea (beside all the superstitious elements which were in Protestantism as much as in Catholicism at that time), Satan is the dynamic and structural unity of evil.

This doctrine of Satan should not be rejected on the basis that such a being does not exist--that is not a matter even for discussion--but it should be interpreted in terms of structures of evil, of which we have all had a great deal of experience since the year 1914, if not before. These structures of evil--these daemonic and satanic structures--are what is behind these ideas. They are not mythological imaginings, although their form is mythological imagination; and their meaning is something quite different. Luther knows about the super-individual power which creates in the individual movements which do not come from the individual, which are strange to it, and which try to destroy it.

But this diabolic destruction (and here again the genius speaks) is on the other hand the wrath of God, namely, the power of God which leads us to self-destruction. Therefore it often happens that in Luther's words the daemonic and the divine attack are not distinguished. God attacks, but he attacks through his wrath, and the tool of his wrath is the devil. This is one and the same act. Sometimes it seems as if the dark will of God--his wrath--and the diabolic will are identical; the devil is the organ of the wrath of God, and sometimes the wrath of God itself.

Much has been made of these ideas by Lutheran mysticism and Lutheran philosophy of life. When today we look back at the development of philosophy over the last three or four hundred years, then we must say that this one line of thought (which today occurs in this country partly as process-philosophy and partly as pragmatism, and on the Continent partly as the "philosophy of life" and partly as Existentialism) can historically and systematically be traced back to these ideas of Luther, through men like Jakob Boehme, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, and so on. The line of thought here is one. This line of thought (I cannot go into this, unfortunately) is Luther's vision of the life-processes, in which God is always present. But often--or always, somehow--he is present in them in terms of wrath, or in the daemonic way.

The Doctrine of Human Servitude But of course I cannot leave it here; for whenever Luther speaks thus, he adds something else. He says: "All this is only the strange way in which God acts; the purpose of all this acting is the kingdom of love. Therefore the real meaning of these negative forces is the realization of love. But who can know this? Only those who look through the external side." You remember that I said a week ago that everything is a mask of God, and we must look through it. The mask of God is this acting (as I have just described it), but behind this is the loving will of God. But God needs this kind of acting. He leaves sin to self-destruction, and by this he shakes up those who are lazy and those who are self-complacent. Satan is the servant of the divine love because he shakes those who rest in themselves.

All this leads to the doctrine of human servitude, which has become one of the principal marks of Protestant thinking. Here again we are in the prophetic tradition. Everywhere in the prophetic tradition we have this idea of human servitude. The divine act begins everything and fulfills everything; and cooperation with God on the same level is impossible. Since modern liberal theology, especially in this country, was a theology of cooperation between God and man, the neo-Reformation theology came as a shock --a tremendous "therapeutic shock", and as such extremely wholesome.

The question of freedom (again let me make this clear, although I think I have already done so) is not that of psychological freedom. Man is always man, and he is distinguished from nature through his freedom. Neither Augustine nor any of the Reformers had any doubts about this point. But the freedom of which they are talking is the freedom of turning to God --and there is no freedom there. Luther says, "It is good so." Let us hear him:

"As to myself, I openly confess that I should not wish free will to be granted me whereby I might endeavor something towards my own salvation [that is, free will only in the sense that he might endeavor to do

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something towards his own salvation], because, even though there were no dangers, no conflicts, no devils, I should be compelled to labor under a continual uncertainty; nor would my conscience ever come to a settled certainty however much it sought to do so in order to satisfy God--as I myself learned, to my bitter cost, through so many years of my own experience."

Here Luther explains why prophetic tradition always speaks of "the servitude of the human will". It is because, if we are dependent on ourselves, we can never be certain of our salvation. But on the other hand, Luther makes it very clear that this does not mean philosophical determinism. He says:

"But by necessity I do not mean compulsion. That is, a man void of the Spirit of God does not do evil against his will as by violence, but he does it spontaneously and with a ready willingness. And this willingness and desire to do evil he cannot abandon, restrain, or change by his own power. Ask experients whose inclinations are fixed upon any one thing how hardened against all persuasion they are.

"But on the other hand, when God works in us, the will is changed by the Spirit of God so that it desires and asks not from compulsion, but responsively from pure willingness, inclination, and accord. All this we do willingly and readily, according to the nature of will; for if it were forced, it would no longer be will since compulsion is unwillingness.

"Thus the human will is, as it were, a beast between the two. If God sits thereon, it wills and goes where God wills; if Satan sits thereon, it wills and goes as Satan wills. Nor is it in the power of its own will to choose for which rider it will run; but the riders themselves contend which shall have and hold it."

This is a vision of the divine-daemonic struggle in the soul of every human being. Instead of the individual separated from every other individual, morally autonomous, making decisions for good and evil, these are two absolutely different images of the human situation. The one is the prophetic tradition; the other is, ultimately, moralistic humanism, even if it is expressed in terms of theology.

The New Reality

This ends our consideration of the negative side of the human predicament. As is to be expected, this is the most emphasized side in the Reformation theology, against the Catholic attempt to make everything less serious. Nevertheless, man's predicament is not described only in terms of separation and servitude. Theology--both Reformation theology and prophetic theology--is also the description of the new reality. But this description always has an element of expectation, of eschatology, of looking at that which is not yet and will come.

It is in terms of this "not yet" that we must understand the positive description of man. The Reformers did not say, "Here we have the holy man, the saint, the new reality; we can grasp it; there it is." They said, "There it is; but it is as if it not yet were, and its fulfillment is a matter of expectation." This eschatological element in the doctrine of man is also something which belongs to all prophetic tradition, from beginning to end.

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Faith Is the Gift Of course, if the situation is as I have described it
of Grace in the words of the Reformers, there is only one way
 out--and it is concentrated in the term "grace".

Grace produces one thing: faith; and not vice versa. One of the greatest perversions of Protestant preaching was that people were told, "You must believe, and then you will have grace." This is the exact opposite of what every Reformer always said: namely, that faith is the first and basic gift of the divine grace. Faith simply means the acceptance of the gift of God --the reunion with God. This is what precedes everything else; and only if this happens, and in the act itself in which it happens, is faith possible.

So we have two distortions here; and if these evenings give you nothing else than the removal from theological thinking of these two distortions, then I am happy! The one is the concept of faith, which does not mean believing in unbelievable things, but which means being grasped by the divine reality and reunited with it. The second is that neither faith nor any other thing we do precedes grace, but grace (namely, the presence of God) precedes everything else. These are the two things the Reformers say; and it is a real sign of the tragic situation of mankind that they have been so greatly distorted into their exact opposites. The prophetic tradition derives everything from God.

The idea of faith in Luther embraces the whole subjective side of religion, the whole relationship of God and man. It is reception of the God who gives himself, who makes himself present, who makes himself small in Christ, who forgives sins (and however the formula may run). It is always receiving or accepting. It has nothing to do, for Luther, with the "fides acquisita"--the willingness to believe in opinions about God on the basis of a general Christian tradition. It does not mean "fides historica", or the acknowledgment of historical fact ("at some time something happened"). "It is," Luther says, "the gift of God which obtains for us the grace of God, expunges the sin, and makes us saved and certain, not by our work but by Christ's work."

Faith in the religious sense is the work of the divine Spirit, which again means the presence of God. It is a dynamic motion of the soul, receiving that which is unconditional and ultimate, uniting itself with God and his will. Consequently, the inhibitions against faith are not of a theoretical character but are based in the self-relatedness of man and his resulting unwillingness to receive the divine community because this would deny human self-love.

Again and again Luther emphasizes the receptive character of faith, doing nothing, only receiving. The Law demands acting; faith demands receiving. In faith all the goods of eternal life are received: the forgiveness of sins which gives us a quiet conscience, and the power of love which "re-turns" our spiritual vitality towards God and man. Therefore faith is a living and restless thing; the true living faith can by no means be lazy.

The Paradoxical Since faith has to do with God's actions, it has a
Character of Faith paradoxical character, for God's acts are paradoxes
 for human reason--they contradict human expectations.
This is true first of Christ, becoming "my Christ" in the faith. Luther says: "As you believe about him, so you have him. Faith makes a unity of

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Christ and man, so that each has what the other has. Christ and myself must creep into each other, so that I am Christ and Christ is me." This simply means the venturing character of faith.

This paradoxical character is even more evident when Christ crucified is considered. It is faith in spite of appearance: "He who believes in Christ must recognize wealth under poverty, honor under blame, joy under sadness, life under death. Because of these paradoxes, the believer from the point of view of nature is crazy and a fool, for he believes in the Cross of Christ, in which every human possibility is negated." Therefore this is the final form of faith, in which no human experience or reason is left. Nevertheless we feel it is true.

Faith is a real transformation into dynamic actuality; and in psychological terms Luther says: "Faith makes the person, and the person makes the works--not works the person. Therefore works are natural consequences, but they have no saving power. Where there is the right faith, there follows action; and the greater the faith, the more action. The right faith is a strong, powerful, active thing. Nothing is impossible to it; it does not rest and stop. It is like original sin, the inner forming power of the soul."

All this means the reversing of morality and religion. Luther identifies the moral Law with death, devil, and sin, in hundreds of works. For Luther the Law is most threatening because it sets our own being, from which we are separated, against us. It condemns us. In Luther's description, there is nothing more rasping than uneasy conscience and despair. He anticipates all modern Existentialism, including Pascal and Kierkegaard, when he describes the conscience as the anxiety which might be produced by the rustling of a dry leaf on a tree, or when he describes his own periods of despair, which never ceased till his death. He called them "Anfechtung", meaning daemonic attacks in which every meaning was lost. And he describes how out of these experiences arises enmity against God, the will to escape him, and even hate of him.

Profound psychological problems are involved here. Fortunately, I cannot go into them! I might, however, make one comment about them. Some psychoanalysts might say, "This is the bad thing about Protestantism and about a man like Luther, that it sets up such absolute categories that there is no escape other than in terms of acceptance of forgiveness." If I rightly understand Karen Horney's last book, this is just what she says: that this ideal which Protestantism has is so high that it necessarily crushes man's conscience, casting him into despair and resulting in neurosis.

On the other hand, if we follow the wisdom of the Catholic Church, against which all these things were said, then we have differentiations--gradations--of duties and of obligations. If everybody is to do according to his ability in his special status or in his special psychological and sociological conditions, then the absolute ideal is lost. And here I think we have a fundamental problem before us. Catholicism and modern psychology are in a kind of alliance against the absolute categories of the Protestant prophetic message; and the question of how to solve this problem is a very hard question--perhaps one of the most central of our day.

The Lutheran and Calvinist
Views of Human Existence

Let me conclude with the two views of the existence of man if he participates in the new being--the new reality--which, although always in the future, is yet in some way paradoxically present.

Luther's view of human existence in the Christian realm is a vision of rising in the courage to face Law and death and devil and everything negative--all forms of non-being, including death as well as sin--in the absolute courage of being accepted by God. It is participation in that which transcends these negativities in all respects. Then there is also the downfall again into a situation of ultimate despair. Luther describes his experience of this as being so much worse than every conception of hell could be that hell cannot hurt anybody who has experienced such attacks. In these experiences Luther's self-consciousness, so to speak, goes up and down, and the line upwards is almost invisible.

In Calvin we have a quite different attitude. It is that of one who, with the same foundation as Luther, understands the new life as a steady ascent, without terrible agitations, without Luther's oscillating, erratic, up-and-down line. The Calvinist life is a self-controlled, self-educating, self-perfecting way nearer to the form of the divine.

These two conceptions have influenced the destiny of the world to a great extent. Out of the Lutheran doctrine of man have arisen the depths of philosophical insight and the daemonic power of the attacks against God and reason. On the other hand, out of the Calvinistic form there has arisen this hard, puritan, self-controlled existence which today needs so much psychoanalytic help because in it the dynamic forces of life are suppressed.

Luther's idea of love and the Christian life is repentance and ecstatic love; Calvin's idea of life is self-surrender and self-control, and action on the basis of this in the service of the kingdom of God. Both have behind themselves the same negative doctrine about human existence; both agree that only the presence of the divine can give the courage to overcome this. But then they go separate ways and create two types of life, which have moved the world in the twentieth century in a way which they themselves would never have expected, and which we ourselves are slowly trying to understand.

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THE NEW COMMUNITY

This third lecture under the general title, "The Recovery of the Prophetic Tradition in the Reformation", deals with "The New Community". This is the point in which the Reformation (and perhaps every prophetic movement, every rediscovery of the prophetic spirit) is in the greatest difficulty. The question is, in what sense can the prophetic message create a living community? This question is the question of Protestantism.

The problems connected with this question are manifold, and most perplexing both to the Reformers as well as to us. In some ways these questions express the "sore spot" of the whole history of Protestantism. Therefore, instead of somewhat ecstatic statements about the divinity of the Divine (which we heard in our first lecture), and gloomy statements about the nature of man (as in our second lecture), tonight we shall hear about the wrestling of the prophetic spirit with the problems of embodiment, of becoming an historical reality.

There are four main problems to which I want to direct your attention. The first can be called "Spirit and Authority", in particular the problem of Biblical authority. The second is "Faith and Organization"; it is the problem of the relationship of the personal faith, which receives the prophetic message, to an ecclesiastical organization. The third is the problem of "The Prophetic Word and Priestly Symbolism": how can that which comes as the Word of God against the priestly reality become again a priestly reality itself? And the fourth problem (of which we have spoken, and which is so powerfully expressed by the Reformers, especially in the doctrine of God) is "The Ultimate Concern and the Life of Society".

The Reformers' Understanding of the Church

These are the four problems, and they are all rooted in the fact that, without exception, the Reformers had a definition and interpretation of the Church which we can only call "spiritual". (This is true of all the Reformers, in spite of the great differences which we shall see later on.) Let me, as I did on the other evenings, give you directly the words of the Reformers.

For Luther, the Church is an assembly of all those on earth who believe in Christ, an assembly of the hearts in one faith--the Communion of the Saints. The unity of these men is neither Rome, nor the Pope, nor ritual activities, nor ecclesiastical orders; it is Christ. Christ gives meaning, vitality, and will to the congregations. Not the will of the individual members, but the objective gift of Christ, makes the Church. So Luther can also call it "the assembly of the faithful, a Christian sacred-people, the congregation of the regenerated and holy. It is holy because Christ is its head, and the Holy Spirit works in it. It is hidden in spirit, or invisible [that is, an object of faith, and not of grasping or touching]. As a spiritual reality it is hidden as Christ is hidden, and God is hidden, and the human heart is hidden."

Here you see immediately the full spiritual character of this idea of the Church. We find it also in Zwingli, the Swiss Reformer (whom I name for the first time, because he is important for the problems connected with

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our subject tonight). Zwingli says: "The Church is the Communion of the Saints, that is, of all those who are faithful." The invisible Church, for him (and this was a very important and effective idea), "is the body of those who are elected by God, in all times, within and outside the historical Church. This body is invisible. It is created by the Spirit. It needs no guide and no vehicle. Therefore the visible Church should never try to distinguish those who are real Christians and those who are not, because the real Christians are in an invisible community through all ages."

This becomes sharply formulated by Calvin: "The basic sense of the word 'Church' is the Church as the invisible community of all elected. Thus it includes not only the saints resident on earth at any one time, but all the elect who have lived from the beginning of the world." Election and visible Church do not coincide at all, for there is a spiritual acting of God apart from the preaching and the sacraments. Of course, preaching and sacraments are the regular modes, but the other ways are open too, for God. So Calvin says:

"When the apostle makes hearing the source of faith, he only describes the ordinary economy and dispensation of the Law, which God generally observes in the calling of his people; but he does not prescribe an unvarying rule for God, precluding his employment of any other method. For God has certainly called many by giving true knowledge of himself in an internal manner, through the illumination of the Spirit without the intervention of any preaching." This means that although God is not bound to the ordinary way of actualizing his purpose--the way of preaching and the sacraments--he normally uses this way. But he is above his own way, and he can grasp everybody internally whenever he wants.

Obviously, this spiritual concept of the Church devaluates the empirical Church; so Calvin says: "The Church in this sense is an emergency creation, an adaptation of God to our finiteness; it is not the historical reality of the new being. It is conditioned by purposes, not by being. The real being of the Church is the hidden body of those who are elected; and the purpose of the visible Church is only to create faith and to find people who are predestinated or elected."

The basis of the spiritual Church, as I have described it in these words of the Reformers, is the message of Christ, or (however it may be expressed) of justification by faith--secondarily the sacraments also, but first of all the message. The Reformers believed that wherever the message of Christ is given, it cannot remain ineffective; that is, that where it is present, there are Christians. This is an ecstatic confidence in the spiritual power of the Word without any organization, without anything except the message.

Spirit and Authority

But even so, the question was, where can one find the Word? And the answer was, "In the Bible." The tradition is distorted, the Church has fallen into heresy, and the Pope is the anti-Christ; so the only place where the word of God can be found, said the Reformers, is the Bible. Then arose the great problems of the authority of the Bible: Why the Bible? If the Bible, in what sense? And second, if the Bible, how to interpret it spiritually? And what about the tradition which has given us the Bible?

Luther's "Testimony of the Holy Spirit" Let us now look, in the light of these questions, first at Luther's doctrine of the Bible. There was a doctrine of the Bible in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance--a doctrine of the Bible as the Divine Law against the Church law, in the later theologians of the Middle Ages, the so-called Nominalists. There was a doctrine of the Church in the Humanists of the Renaissance, going back to the sources; and one of the real sources is the Bible. Later Catholicism had a doctrine of the authority of the Bible, in both secular and theological terms; and often the Reformers did nothing but repeat that kind of Biblicism.

But Luther goes beyond this. He brings the doctrine of the Scripture into unity with his new interpretation of religion as a personal relation to God. He says: "The Spirit who has created it testifies to its truth in our hearts, and only through this witness of him who has created the Bible are we able to believe it. Everyone will be certain about the Gospel who has in himself the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which is the Gospel. The believer becomes certain; the unbeliever remains uncertain."

What is the object of this "testimony of the Holy Spirit"? It is the Word of God within the Bible, the message of the Gospel and its articles. This message existed before the Bible, according to Luther, in the preaching of the apostles, and the writing of the Bible is an emergency act. Therefore only the religious content, not the writing itself, is important. It is this message which is the object of the experience of the Reformers. Thus must the famous words be understood, "that the criterion of apostolic truth in the Scripture, and the standard of the value of the different writings, is whether and in what manner they deal with Christ and his work. This is the only criterion."

This criterion is fulfilled especially, according to Luther, by the Fourth Gospel, by Paul's Epistles, and by I Peter. And on this basis Luther makes very courageous statements: for instance, that Judas and Pilate would be apostolic if they gave the message of Christ, and Paul and John not, if they did not. Or that everybody today who had the Spirit as powerfully as the prophets and the apostles could create new Decalogues, and another New Testament. "Only because this is not the case, we must drink from their fountain." These words are the extreme anti-legalistic, anti-Nominalistic, and anti-Humanistic interpretation of the Biblical authority.

From this point of view, Luther could make strong criticism of the Biblical books. It means nothing to him whether the "five books of Moses" are by Moses or not--Luther knows that the texts of the prophets are in disorder, and that the later ones are dependent on the earlier ones. He knows that their concrete prophecies often proved to be errors; that the Book of Esther and the Apocalypse of John do not belong to the real Scripture; "the Fourth Gospel excels the Synoptics in value and power; James' Epistle has no evangelical character whatsoever."

This was all extremely bold and extremely spirited, and therefore it could not stand. No church, as an educational and political institution, can avoid an element of legalism; and Protestantism used the Bible legalistically. That was the way in which Luther's spiritual freedom was lost; but it was not entirely lost. I believe that Protestantism in our period of history was able to receive the critical movement of historical research

of the Biblical books because Luther's prophetic spirit had undercut the legalistic Biblicism of the later Middle Ages--the legalistic Biblicism which after him found a most terrible expression in his own churches. Luther himself was far above the Lutheran churches; and the very fact that Protestantism was able to stand something which as far as I know no other religion ever was able to stand--namely, criticism of its holy books in terms of historical honesty--that we owe to Luther's courageous statements about the authority of the Bible.

Calvin's "Document of Truth" When we come to Calvin, the problem becomes immediately actual. Here already the second generation speaks; and here the completely legal mind--in spite of its tremendous religious and moral power--expresses the authority of the Bible in forms which are quite different from Luther at his best. If we make this comparison, we cannot conceal that Luther was by no means always at his best, by no means always at the top of this spiritual freedom he had when making the statements I have quoted. Calvin says: "At length, that the truth might remain in the Word, in a continual course of instruction to all ages, God determined that the same oracles which he had deposited with the patriarchs should be committed to public records. With this design the Law was promulgated, to which the prophets were afterwards annexed as interpreters." Look at these terms! "Deposited", "public records", "law", "promulgated", "annexed", "interpreters"--every word of this sentence betrays legalistic thinking.

Therefore, according to Calvin, the Bible must be obeyed: "Hence originates all true wisdom, when we embrace with reverence the testimony which God has been pleased thereon to deliver concerning himself. For obedience is the source, not only of an absolutely perfect and complete faith, but of all right knowledge of God. The obedience to the document of truth presupposes that the document is written, and the heavenly doctrine cannot be lost or corrupted. So the Scripture, collecting in our minds the otherwise confused notions of Deity, dispels the darkness and gives us a clear view of the true God. This, then, is the singular favor, that in the instruction of the Church God not only uses new teachers, but even opens his sacred mouth." God is a teacher, through the Bible; so we have both sides: a teacher who preserves us from weakness in the doctrine about him, and the authority to which we must be obedient. In other words, we have intellect and will, instead of the immediacy of the religious experience.

This comes out in the fact that that which Calvin emphasizes is written. Calvin says: "For if we consider the mutability of the human mind, it will be easy to perceive the necessity of the heavenly doctrine being thus committed to writing, that it might not be lost in oblivion, but used by all those to whom God determined to make his instructions effectual." In the same sense, Calvin speaks of the "peculiar school of the children of God".

The way in which this has been done becomes clear when we see what Calvin means by "the testimony of the divine Spirit": "For as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own Word, so also the Word will never again be believed in the hearts of men until it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit, which convinces us that they [the prophets] faithfully deliver the oracles which were divinely entrusted to them."

This means that the testimony does not witness that Christ is my Savior, but it witnesses that the Biblical words as a whole are faithfully delivered divine oracles. "They who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated [carrying with it its own evidence]. Though it elicits our reverence by its internal majesty, it never seriously affects us until it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts. Therefore, being illumined by him, we now believe the divine original of the Scripture."

This is enough to show how the same term, "testimony of the divine Spirit", means two quite different things. In the one case it means the immediate conviction that the message of God is for me; in the other case it means the conviction that the Bible is the original and authenticated statement of God. This is also expressed in the way in which Calvin describes the divine origin of the Bible. He speaks of "the dictation of the Holy Spirit"; he speaks of the dictation of the Spirit of Christ; he speaks of the apostles as "the pen of the Holy Spirit". He thrusts aside Luther's criticism of the Biblical books; he says they cannot be refuted on the basis of internal characteristics.

Thus Protestantism established "the law-book of truth". In the history of Protestantism, Calvin conquered Luther completely with respect to the establishment of the Bible as the written authority. So in what sense can the Bible now be the authority in the Church? The answer is that the Bible interprets itself; everybody who reads it knows its meaning. (This again is a non-legalistic, spiritual confidence in the power of the prophetic Word; and it is interesting that this spiritual idea worked: there is no doubt that a common Protestant spirit exists. If you come from outside the Protestant world, then you see, in spite of the 270 denominations in this country, that Protestantism is a reality which has a common spirit and a common character.)

No relationship to the tradition could be established by the Reformers; by their criticism they had cut the connection with the past, except for the Bible. A theory, later described by Kierkegaard as "becoming contemporaneous with the Bible" (I call it, in a less friendly way, "the jumping theory" of Protestantism--namely, jumping over 2000 years from today to the period in which the Bible was written), developed. The tradition was not recognized. Of course it was effective, but it was not envisaged; and the real relationship between Bible and tradition, between the Christian present and the past of the Bible, was not given. Everything between was considered to be human.

(As an interesting sidelight to this, Karl Barth has called the discipline of Church history "the auxiliary science in theology". This means that it reminds us that a few human things have happened in the meantime, but that this has no fundamental significance whatever. It is not a theological discipline; it is only an auxiliary discipline. This is the consequence of cutting off the tradition.)

What you see here is the following thing: you see the great, prophetic, spiritual start with respect to the Bible in Luther. Then you see the impossibility of maintaining this, even in Lutheranism--and by no means in Calvinism--and the resulting settling down to a new authority which, by the way it was formulated (as "dictation of the divine Spirit"), became more suppressive than anything in Catholicism.

Faith and Organization

Now I come to the second problem, that of faith and organization. The spiritual Church which I have described had no definite organization. But here, according to their different evaluation of the Law, there is a great difference between Luther and Calvin. For Luther, of course, no organization of the visible Church had any divine authority. Even the vocation of the minister is a matter of expediency--and so is everything else. We have already spoken about the general priesthood of every believer: every believer can be a minister if he has the abilities and is called by a congregation; and if the call ends, he loses his function and is what he was before--a layman, even in the technical sense.

Calvin, again, was more removed from this absolutely spiritual idea of the organization. He introduced offices of the Church and descriptions of the Church which show a different spirit. For Calvin, the Church is constituted by divine Law. It is characterized by three marks and four offices. The three marks of the Church are doctrine, sacraments, and discipline. Doctrine and sacraments are the marks of the Church for Luther, too, and for all Protestants; but discipline is something peculiar to Calvinism.

Here we see the same thing: the spiritual freedom of Luther's beginning becomes embodied in an organized form in which discipline makes the existence of the congregation historically possible. Calvin says: "As some have such a hatred of discipline as to abhor the very name, they should attend to the following consideration: as the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the Church, so discipline forms the ligaments which connect the members together and keep each in its proper place."

There are also four offices of the Church, which are demanded by the Bible. Calvin says: "There are four orders of offices established by Our Lord for the government of his Church: first the pastors or ministers, then the doctors, then the presbyters, and fourthly the deacons." (The fact that it is these only and not others does not concern us here.) The reason for these four offices is no sociological or historical reason; it is divine Law. So again an element of canonic Law, of divine Law, comes into Protestantism to enable it to maintain itself as an organized power.

This second point (I could say much more about it, but I don't want to!) had infinite consequences. While the Lutheran churches in Europe, which had no organization of themselves, became very soon departments of the State administration, the Calvinistic congregations, in which the Spirit was modified by the Law--the spiritual ecstasy by the daily hard work of discipline--not only produced the most powerful forms of historical Protestantism, but for this very reason saved Protestantism historically in the struggles against the Counter-Reformation. It is very interesting to see this situation--to see that in order to actualize itself in time and space, the prophetic spirit had to be transformed into the spirit of the Law.

The Prophetic Word and Priestly Symbolism

Now I come to the third point: the prophetic word and priestly symbolism. Luther knows ultimately only one thing in religion: the Word of forgiveness. Everything else is secondary. Wherever this Word of

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 3. Identify the object

forgiveness is spoken and heard, there God is present. Therefore special services on Sundays or other occasions are not necessary in principle; they are merely adaptations to the poor people who cannot read and who have no other way of hearing the message.

For Calvin, however, it is a matter of discipline to participate in the services. This means that the inner necessity to participate in the church services is gone. Two forms of expediency have replaced it. The Catholic must go to the Mass; presence at it is a matter of salvation. The Protestant must participate either because that is the only way of hearing the Word, or because it is a matter of discipline. Thus the reason for the church services, for the cult, is not situated in the center of Christianity. This is, of course, one of the reasons why so many Protestant churches, during the centuries, were empty; there was no religious demand behind the coming to church.

This also had consequences for the relationship of Word and Sacrament. If the Word is everything, the Sacrament is only a visual confirmation which you might or might not have. Luther tried to save what could be saved by emphasizing the mystical presence of the Body of Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Zwingli dissolved it (in a Humanistic way) into an occasion for remembering the death of Christ. Calvin mediated between them. But, because of the absolute emphasis on the prophetic Word, on the message of God and forgiveness, of judgment and promise, all of them lost any ultimate necessity for the Sacrament. Therefore the sacraments were very largely dying within Protestantism. They were maintained only by that great power which we call custom--ecclesiastical custom, the memories of our own childhood. But systematically it was hard to give a theological reason for the Sacrament.

But if everything is based on the Word, then the consciousness which hears the Word is overburdened. Therefore today we have a reaction against the intellectualization of the Word in Protestantism. We are trying again to discover a way for symbols, for revealing symbols--symbols which reveal immediately, which open up something of God and something of the soul at the same time, so that they can meet. But such symbols--how can we find them? Can we find them if they are not really believed? And how can the Protestant spirit--the prophetic spirit--believe in the necessity of symbols? That is another fundamental question of Protestantism.

The Ultimate Concern and the Life of Society

Luther's Doctrine of the State	Now my last point: the ultimate concern and the life of society. Luther's doctrine of the State is one of the things from the point of view of which all Protestantism, especially all Lutheranism, is condemned. I was told by somebody who had had a very good education that he knows only one thing about Luther, namely, that Luther was against the Peasants' Revolution! This is certainly not the beginning of the Reformation; and it shows how completely un-understood and distorted the picture of the Reformers has become because of the infinite difficulty of relating the ultimate concern--the ultimate message of the divine as divine--to the daily-life problems of our social and political existence.
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONERS OF THE
BOARD OF CHEMISTRY
FOR THE YEAR 1900

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Luther tried to renew the original radicalism of early Christianity, in which no relation whatsoever to the State was envisaged. He renewed the ethics of love, of suffering, of humility; he interpreted the Ten Commandments in the sense that the Second Table must be understood in the light of the First, namely, as love of God. This, however, he said, was possible only in paradise; it is man's essential nature, but not what man is in existence today. For here, today, in our period in history, in time and space, we need all those things which are against love--power, and property, and force. They are unavoidable.

But how can this contradiction be overcome? In Catholicism, the solution was that some people represent the spiritual idea completely--the monks and, partly, the clergy; and on the other hand, other people--namely, the laymen--represent the needs of this world completely. Such a division of functions and meanings does not exist in Protestantism. As we saw in our two preceding lectures, the demand of God, the judgment and the promise, go absolutely to everybody in the same way. Everybody is under the absolute demand; but at the same time everybody is in a special office in our sinful existence. There, in this office, in this function, in this profession, or whatever it is, man must love and suffer, as Christian. And yet he must command and punish, as citizen.

This means that Protestantism has moved the whole problem of the two moralities which we have in the medieval Church into the depths of the individual personality. Nobody can escape this situation. Nor can we follow the sectarian attitude, which negates every positive law, every participation in the State. We must do both things.

Luther's solution is that the one is the proper work of love and the other is the strange work of love. The proper work of love is self-surrender and suffering; the strange work of love is power and punishing, taking up arms, and so forth. But now, he says, this strange work of love seems to be anti-love; nevertheless it too is in the service of love, for there could be no love if there were no order, power, and life of the State. That is Luther's solution. I think it is an astonishingly profound solution, this idea of God's "proper work" and God's "strange work". It is the only way I can see in which the absolute dualism between the two realms--the realm of love and the realm of power--can be overcome in the depths of the individual.

It is understandable that on this basis Luther was very radical in his demands for the use of the sword. Someone has said that Luther glorified power for the sake of power; but that is not true. He acknowledged the necessity of power under the conditions of sin, and he combined with this a deep resignation and a hidden hope for salvation from the whole power game with its resulting war and destruction.

Furthermore, Luther replaces the element of rational criticism by a strong historical positivism: the existing powers are right, even when they are evil, because they are brought about by the Providence of God. Revolution against them is not allowed, for it is the negation of the principle of order and is self-contradictory. Even in paradise (the symbol for what we are essentially) there were degrees of power and authority; and in the state of sin, authority needs force. Luther despised the masses; he felt that wise men are very rare--as rare as real Christians. The people must be forced. Educational optimism is far from everything he believed.

Someone has said that this was the way in which Lutheran Protestantism in particular became the soil for Nazism. This is, of course, infinitely primitive and unhistorical; but there is one little point of truth in this statement: namely, that on this basis it was possible that the German nation, educated for hundreds of years by Lutheran ethics of positivism, of subordination to the given authorities, was not able to resist. Resistance had for them the character of revolution, and revolution was condemned from the very beginning as a revolt against the divine Providence.

Zwingli's View All this is quite different in Zwingli and Calvin. Zwingli developed most of the decisive ideas of the theocratic, territorial Church. The State must be based on the Word of God; the Commandments are the highest sources of the civil law. Therefore the government must be Christian amongst Christians, and it must guarantee the preaching of the pure doctrine. In Zurich the Reformation was introduced on the basis of the decrees of Christ: the best State is that in which the divine Word is most controlling; therefore a government which contradicts these decrees must be dismissed with God. This is the word of revolution, "dismissed with God". And this is valid not only for a special country; but every country is responsible for all Christian countries. So Zwingli tried to create (what later on Cromwell did so successfully) international alliances for the establishment of Christian nations. Zwingli himself met his death in the war resulting from this theology, while the same idea in Cromwell saved world Protestantism and has created the spirit behind two crusades of the Anglo-Saxon countries for Christian and humanistic politics, and is just on the way to produce a third crusade for the same purpose. (Here you see how important for world history the ideas of poor little theologians can be, sometimes long after their death!)

Calvin's Theocratic Idea of the State Calvin praises much more than Luther ever did the meaning of the State. He had learned this as a Humanist, not only from the point of view of the repression of sins (in which he agreed with Luther), but also from a positive, rational point of view. He favors an aristocracy as the most ideal form of leadership; and he attacks the sectarian radicals who want to remodel the whole world into a new form without any tribunals or magistrates or civil authorities: "But he who knows how to distinguish between the body and the soul, between this present transitory life and the future eternal life, will find no difficulty in understanding that the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very different and remote from each other, since it is Jewish folly to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world." (This is an anticipating condemnation of large sections of American liberal theology and denominational development.)

Now I will give you a quotation in which the difference and at the same time the connection between the kingdom of God and the State, as well as the relation of both to the doctrine of man, are most clearly expressed by Calvin. This can be considered the charter of the Calvinistic theocracy:

"For that spiritual reign, even now upon earth, commences within us some preludes of the heavenly kingdom, and in this mortal and transitory life affords us some prelibations of immortal and incorruptible blessedness; but this civil government is designed, as long as we live in this world, to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the pure doctrine of religion, to defend the constitution of the Church, to regulate

our lives in a manner requisite for the society of men, to form our manners to civil justice, to promote our concord with each other, and to establish general peace and tranquility; all which I confess to be superfluous, if the kingdom of God, as it now exists in us, extinguishes the present life. But if it is the will of God, that while we are aspiring towards our true country, we be pilgrims on the earth, and if such aids are necessary to our pilgrimage, they who take them from man deprive him of his human nature."

These words speak of the theocratic task of the State to guarantee the true religion. They indicate a pessimistic feeling about the world. Especially important is the formula of the theocratic idea of the State. Theocracy does not mean hierocracy (the Roman Church is not a theocracy; it is a hierocracy--the hierarchy rules); theocracy is when God's will rules directly through the laws of the State; and these two concepts should be distinguished. Thus Puritanism was theocratic, while the Roman and Greek Churches are not.

For Calvin, the basis of the magistracy is both Tables of the Law; the Old Testament shows this clearly. Then he says: "Christian princes and magistrates ought to be ashamed of their indolence if they do not make religion the object of their most serious care. It is the honor of God they defend by doing so; it is wrong to confine magistrates entirely to the administration of justice among men in disregard of what is much more important, the pure worship of God." On this basis Calvin also solved the problem of revolution in a different way from Luther. First he agrees with Luther: the individual citizen can only suffer. But there are lower magistrates, and they might react against the highest offices, the princes and kings, if the Law of God is at stake.

The Dynamic Polarity of Protestantism

We have seen in these considerations tonight that the more Protestantism becomes actualized the more the prophetic spirit becomes embodied in an organization; and this organization shows anti-prophetic traits--it shows the characteristics of the Law. On the other hand, the more it remains spiritual, the more it leaves a vacuum for other forces which invade our daily life. Therefore Calvinistic Protestantism has the power to resist such intruding forces, but it is subject to the Law. Lutheran Protestantism left a vacuum for other forces, and they invaded it and created the crisis of the twentieth century.

I believe that no formula can solve this problem. The tension between the prophetic principle and its realization is an everlasting problem of religion, for it is rooted in the basic relation of God and man--that God, who infinitely transcends man, becomes manifest to man and appears among men. When men receive him, they inescapably make an idol of him, and produce idols day by day; and the prophetic spirit must rise again and must protest.

Religion stands in this dynamic polarity; and my last word to the problem of Protestantism is that, however poor and weak it may be externally, Protestantism is the strongest inner dynamic power in the history of religion and of Christianity--as long as it is conscious of its function of showing the tension of these two elements, which is another expression of the tension of human existence itself.

Note: The Organizing Committee is deeply indebted to Dr. A. T. Mollegen for special assistance given to the Hendersons in their editing of Dr. Tillich's transcripts.

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10 December 1950

III. Prophetic Insights Today

Four lectures by the Rev. Clifford L. Stanley, Th.D.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Introduction

Certain European observers of American Christianity profess to find that its distinctive note is the idea of a kingdom of God on earth. It is rather surprising to us who live in this complicated pattern of religious life that there should seem to be any unity at all in it; for we can see only the trees, and the wood is not apparent to us. It is even more surprising to us that an idea so noble as that of the kingdom of God should appear to be the principle of unity in the elaborate panorama of religion in America, for it is astonishing for any living Christians to think very much of this idea at all.

One of the mysteries of Christian history is the fate of the idea of the kingdom of God. The term itself hardly survives the New Testament, although it is a proverb with us that the kingdom of God is a central, if not the central, theme of the New Testament. What we do not realize is how much this proverb is itself dependent upon modern developments. Many people in the intervening centuries have read, studied, and loved the New Testament, but only we understand how dominant is this particular idea in that holy book.

The Ruling of God The word which we translate as the "kingdom" of God ought rather to be translated the "ruling" of God. It suggests not a static thing, like a realm over which the divine Being presides, but rather the process of his ruling over that which is the subject of his rule. What this word refers to is the immediate presence and sovereignty of God. It is true that beyond the immediate activity of the divine life itself, a structural concept is implied in this word "kingdom"; but that structural concept is a time, a period, a temporal idea rather than a spatial idea of a realm over which God presides. In our day, we tend to interpret it spatially, as an area over which God rules; whereas in the New Testament it was much more a period over which his rule was made visible and, in that sense, was perfected.

This idea of the kingdom of God is dependent upon the prophetic development which preceded the coming of Christ; without that prophetic development, the notion of the kingdom of God would not be intelligible--nor, as a matter of fact, would it even be possible. So, in mentioning this word, we not only hark back to the New Testament development itself, but we also suggest the rich and varied prophetic stream of thought which preceded the New Testament and which was fulfilled in it.

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The Recovery of the Term The term "kingdom of God", which was so important in the thought of Christ and of his immediate followers, was lost until modern times. There were two independent lines of recovery of this term--and of the idea itself, to the extent that the idea is dependent on the very term. One of these lines of development took place in Germany. It was begun inadvertently by Immanuel Kant, the philosopher; it was carried on by Schleiermacher, the founder of modern theology; and it was brought to its conclusion by Albrecht Ritschl, the great successor of Schleiermacher.

Another line of development (one that is much closer to our concern here) was the American development, which also rehabilitated and began again to use this term "kingdom of God". It is noteworthy that both the German line of development (which began with Kant and culminated in Ritschl) and the American line of development stem from Protestantism. This is significant. The idea of the kingdom of God is in the Reformers--indeed, we may say that the Reformation is primarily the restoration of the prophetic element in Christianity. This development had been overlaid and almost entirely lost in the centuries before the Reformation; and the Reformation, though it means many things, means much more the recovery of the prophetic insight than it does anything else. However, the term "kingdom of God" was not used by the Reformers; but it was used in America and by the modern liberal German thinkers Schleiermacher and Ritschl.

The Development of Millenarianism in America

Turning now to the American development, the question I should like to ask is this: Is the idea of the kingdom of God on earth the characteristic American religious idea, or not? Can we say that from the very beginning of the American development the idea of a kingdom of God on earth was its unifying and creative insight? Was this true from the beginning?

There is a great study of this question by Richard Niebuhr, entitled The Kingdom of God in America. I acknowledge a heavy dependence upon this book in what follows, especially in the first part of this lecture; and if through what I have to say tonight I can induce a number of you to read and study this book, the lecture will have been worth while. Richard Niebuhr, examining this question of whether or not the kingdom of God on earth is the characteristic religious idea in America, concludes that it is. He writes:

"The idea of the Kingdom of God has indeed been the dominant theme in American Christianity, just as the idea of the Vision of God had been paramount in medieval faith. But it has not always meant the same thing. In the early period of American life, when foundations were laid on which we all have had to build, 'Kingdom of God' meant 'sovereignty of God'; in the creative period of awakening and revival it meant 'reign of Christ'; and only in the most recent period has it come to mean 'Kingdom on earth'."

As you see, he divides the expressions of this characteristic American notion into three successive expressions: first, "sovereignty of God"; second, "reign of Christ"; and third, "kingdom of God on earth". We might have a look at each of these in turn, and particularly at the third.

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"The Sovereignty
of God"

First a word about the kingdom of God inasmuch as it is construed as the sovereignty of God. This was the view which dominated the first period of American religious thought, from the time of the settlement of the colonies to the "Great Awakening". How shall we describe this particular conception of the kingdom of God? It refers to a notion in which God's rule is construed as a living reality--as the deepest of all realities to which thought and action must conform. God's rule is a reality where the spirits of men are concerned, where nature is involved, and where history is in question. This rule of God is not of the future, particularly--it is from everlasting. It is not something to which we look forward; it is something with which we must always reckon as being deeper than any alleged "laws of nature". What it requires of man is loyalty; indeed, man's temporal and eternal welfare depends upon the way he ranges himself in regard to this underlying sovereignty of a holy and majestic God.

During the early period of American thought there was no appeal to men of good will to bring in some kingdom of God, construed as a better time, that would be a perfect social order--oh, no! Man was considered to be corrupt; and appeal was not made to him, but rather men pointed to God and said, "You must reckon with him!" Even so, out of what might at first sight seem to be unpromising ground, came several astonishing results.

The first of these results was a constitutionalism which considered that all human affairs, all social order, must be based upon the divine will, as its principles were revealed in Biblical history. Later on, the American people were to turn even more naturally to the constitutional method of doing things; but this was natural for them from the very beginning because they had ranged all human affairs against the background of the unvarying will and character of the God who rules over all things.

The second rather interesting result which came out of this was the independence of the Church, as against not only civil but also ecclesiastical rulers. The reason for this was that God rules, and particularly over his household, the Church. A third result was the relativizing of all human authority. The reason for this was that God was the only absolute authority; moreover, there was the skepticism about corrupt men to which we referred a moment ago. The system of checks and balances, which we take so easily and which we often attribute to other sources, comes partly--though not exclusively--from this development that we are now considering.

"The Reign of Christ"

The Great Awakening.-- The second way in which American thought has construed the kingdom of God is as the reign of Christ. This refers particularly to the kind of thought that was inaugurated by the Great Awakening. That revival began with Jonathan Edwards and others in New England, and included the work of the Wesleys and Whitfield. It dominated the religious life of this country in the eighteenth century.

The occasion of the Great Awakening was the development which had taken place in America after the period of colonization. The American people had become used to political freedom, not only as it had been known in Great Britain, but particularly as it had been developed in America. They knew economic independence: every man was a freeholder and, if he was

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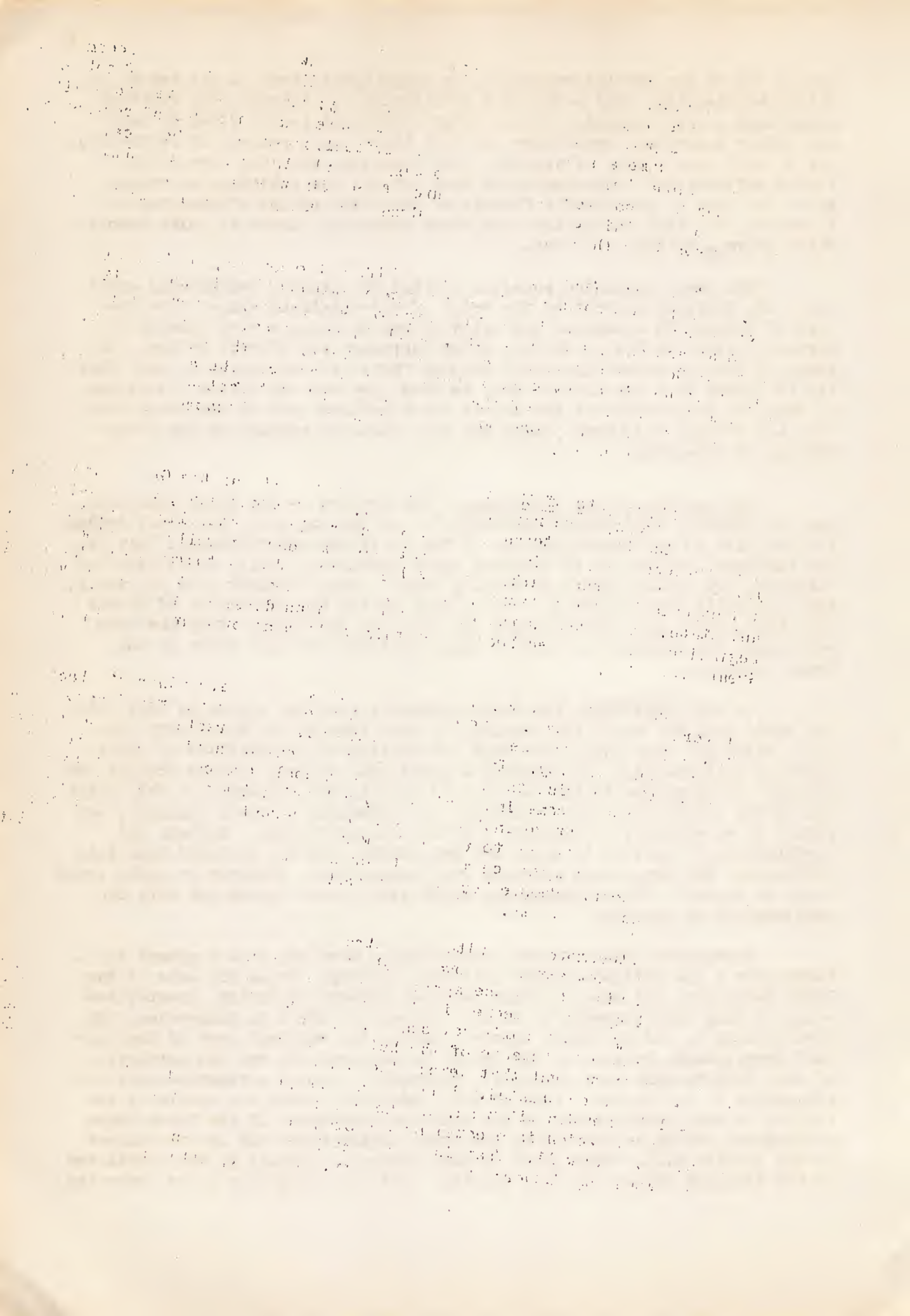
not in one of the settled societies, he could always move on and become so. Characteristically, this people was intellectually literate; the frontier encouraged a very pragmatic notion of morality; and people lived in small and widely separated communities, so that there was a removal of restraints. Out of this came a kind of absolute individualism--what has been called "a Yankee rationalism"--threatening to wash out all the religious substance which had been so prominent a feature of the first period of American life. It was to fill this vacuum that the Great Awakening rushed in, with results which prevail to this very day.

The Great Awakening somewhat shifted the ground, religiously speaking. Its interest was not in the reign of God construed almost like the laws of nature; it construed the reign of God as being a very dynamic and personal action of God in Christ, which thereupon had effects in men. The reign of God now became his reign through Christ in the hearts of men; that is, it issued in a new kind of man, in whom love was the active principle, in whom the inspiration of the Spirit was a present fact--a man whose horizons had widened and whose powers had been enlarged because of the actualization of redemption.

The Results of the Awakening.-- The results of the Great Awakening, for our concern, were rather paradoxical. On the one hand, the Great Awakening gave rise to an internalization of the religious establishment; that is, the churches involved in it purified their membership rolls, eliminated the lukewarm, and became marked by loyalty tests. They withdrew from the world, and especially from politics. During this period the separation of Church and State, which had characterized the American development from the very beginning, was deepened because of this withdrawal brought about by the Great Awakening.

On the other hand, the Great Awakening sent its adherents back into the world in a new way. For example, it gave rise to the missionary movement, which has been one of the most outstanding characteristics of modern American Christianity. It inspired a great deal of anti-slavery thought and action. It gave rise to the founding of schools and colleges; at this point the Sunday school came into existence, not primarily to teach religion, but rather as an educative instrument for the underprivileged. Asylums and institutions of service to those who were broken and who suffered came into existence. The temperance movement was inaugurated. Interest in world peace began to appear. People became concerned with prison reform and with the amelioration of poverty.

Furthermore (and without contradicting what was said a moment ago), there came a new attitude toward political liberty. Those who were in the Great Awakening, and whose springs had been renewed by Christ, trusted men--men as they were redeemed in Christ--in any of life's contingencies, and particularly in the political sphere. During the earliest part of the American development, because of the belief in original sin and the corruption of man, they thought that democratic movements--popular movements--were not altogether to be trusted. Part of this skepticism about the people is reflected in our Constitution, in the relative remoteness of the Upper House of Congress, which is elected by the State Legislatures and is not subject to the popular will. That is in no small measure a result of the skepticism of the Founding Fathers of this country. But now, after the Great Awakening,



men who were deeply in this movement felt that ordinary people, if they were redeemed in Christ, were to be trusted. And so, due to this movement, there was an enhancement of political liberty.

"The Kingdom on Earth" The third interpretation of the kingdom of God is the one in which we are particularly concerned.

As you can see by now, it is closely tied into, and dependent upon, these previous developments. This third interpretation of the kingdom of God is that a kingdom is coming, a better time is dawning, a new order of society looms ahead.

The Puritans (who were so important in the earliest days of our people's life) had a hope for the future; but it was the orthodox Western hope which had developed as early as Augustine, and which by and large went through the cataclysm of the Reformation without serious change. This hope was mainly based upon the Greek notion of the Vision of God: man's hope was not a "new time" in this world; it was a vertical hope for an eternity in which he should see God, and whose content was primarily the knowing of God as God now knows all of us.

The longed-for end was immortality of the spirit much more than it was the resurrection of the body. The crisis which evidenced the sovereignty of God was the crisis of death, after which came the Judgment, rather than a crisis for society as a whole. The death of the individual, bringing about the dividing line between time and eternity, was the place where God's arm was revealed; and that which lay beyond death was what men hoped for, rather than that which would come in a better tomorrow.

In a word, during the first period of American religious development, society had no grand destiny such as the individual had. Society, which is confined to this world, had no hope; man's only hope lay in his release from time. This is rather inconsistent, because at the same time it was held that God ruled the whole of life; and yet the coming kingdom--the kingdom insofar as it was eschatological--was for the individual alone, and beyond this world.

The Rise of At this point the American development was not in
the Millenarian Hope the prophetic tradition. With the prophets, the
 sovereignty of God, where hope was concerned, was
manifested primarily in connection with the life of peoples, of social
wholes. The judgment of God was seen by the prophet to be connected with
the doom of peoples and with the threat that ever recurs where historical
peoples are involved. The promise of God, which manifested his sovereignty,
his ability to do for people, was evidenced in the transformation and resur-
gence of peoples after periods of exile and of diminution. Not death, but
the coming kingdom in a future time--not eternity, but God's rule in the
world of tomorrow--was the prophetic standard of thought and judgment of
all things human.

But millenarian hopes, though they did not mark the earliest period of American religious life, began to appear fairly early--in connection with the Great Awakening, we may say--even as early as Jonathan Edwards. Richard Niebuhr writes:

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's views on the state of the Union and the progress of the war.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the military operations of the Army during the year 1861, and also a list of the names of the officers who have been promoted during the year.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy Department, dated January 15, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the naval operations of the Navy during the year 1861, and also a list of the names of the officers who have been promoted during the year.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, dated January 20, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and also a list of the names of the officers who have been promoted during the year.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, dated January 25, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and also a list of the names of the officers who have been promoted during the year.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the State, dated February 1, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and also a list of the names of the officers who have been promoted during the year.

"Many efforts have been made to account for the prevalence in American Christianity of the millenarian tendency. It has been erroneously ascribed to the early Calvinists and with greater reason to the left-wing Protestants. Yet the Awakening and the revivals seem above all to have made it the common and vital possession of American Christians. They brought the remote possibility very near. The rise in American faith of the idea of the coming kingdom was not due to an importation from without, that is, from rationalism or political idealism."

It is rather astonishing that the millenarian hope was expressed as early as Jonathan Edwards. In his own words, the Awakening was to him "a great and wonderful event, a strange revolution, an unexpected surprising overturning of things. . . . The new Jerusalem . . . has begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven's glory given upon earth." No mean estimate of the course of things!

Jonathan Edwards allowed himself to mention some of the things that would characterize this better day which he saw coming. It would be a time of light and knowledge, a time of great holiness, and a time of universal peace and good understanding among nations. This time would be characterized by the greatest economic prosperity, by health and long life; it would be followed by a sense of ease and pleasantness, and by cheerfulness of mind; it would be marked by wealth, and a great increase of children!

Though Jonathan Edwards first expressed the millenarian aspect of American thought, there is no better expression of it to be found than that given by Alexander Campbell. Alexander Campbell, who is represented in our day by the church known as the Disciples of Christ, or the Christian Church, had a magazine which he called The Millennial Harbinger. (I don't know whether he thought his magazine was the harbinger, or whether he himself was the harbinger, but at any rate this was his interest in things!) When it first appeared he wrote:

"This work shall have for its object the development and introduction of that political and religious order of society called the millennium [note the words, 'political and religious'!], which will be the consummation of that ultimate amelioration of society proposed in the Christian Scriptures."

As he warms to his theme, Alexander Campbell says that there is no limit "to the maximum of social and refined bliss which would flow from the very general or universal prevalence and triumphs of Evangelical principles." Notice how closely his millennial hope is connected with the spread of "evangelical principles". Hence we are not surprised to read that, "The Christian of the 19th century has been stationed by Providence on a sublime eminence, from which he can behold the fulfillment of illustrious prophecies and look backwards upon nearly the whole train of events leading to the millennium."

The Social Gospel

With all this development of the kingdom of God, issuing finally in a hope for a coming kingdom in this world, the stage is set for the Social

Gospel. The Social Gospel has other roots besides the idea of the kingdom of God, but this is its chief and indispensable root; and the hope of the coming kingdom has other modern expressions besides the Social Gospel, but this is its most characteristic expression. So we can do no better, in tracing out this peculiarly American idea of the kingdom of God, than to look closely at the Social Gospel.

The term "Social Gospel" became current in this country between the years 1896 and 1900. It was popularized through being the name of a magazine called The Social Gospel: A Magazine Obedient to the Law of Love. This magazine was produced by a Utopian group called the Christian Commonwealth Colony, which settled in Georgia during the years we have mentioned. But the earliest statement of the Social Gospel as we now have it was in 1851--in other words, long before the term itself came into use; and the earliest practitioner of this particular expression of Christianity was Stephen Colwell, a Philadelphia iron merchant and student of economics. However, the greatest exponent of the Social Gospel is undoubtedly Walter Rauschenbusch; and for the rest of our time this evening we shall confine ourselves to his version of the Social Gospel.

Walter Rauschenbusch Walter Rauschenbusch was born in 1861 in Rochester. He was the seventh of a line of ministers; his background was German pietism. He was for eleven years the minister of the Second Baptist Church in New York, on West 45th Street; and in this parish he had firsthand and continuous contact with grinding poverty. The demands of a situation such as this were so severe and unrelenting that they broke down his pietism and caused him to seek something to take its place.

While he was pastor in New York, he participated in a monthly publication called For the Right, dedicated to the interests of the working people of New York City, and written from the standpoint of Christian Socialism. After his eleven years in the pastorate, he traveled in Europe, studying sociology and the teachings of Jesus in Germany. He also came into firsthand contact with the Rochdale Cooperative movement in Great Britain. He was very much impressed by this movement, and considered writing a book about it. Then he returned to Rochester, where he became a teacher in the Seminary, and spent the rest of his life as a professor of church history. He died in 1918.

The influences that played upon Rauschenbusch's spirit were first a group of men in New York (during the years of his pastorate) called "The Brotherhood of the Kingdom". Another influence was Henry George, the exponent of the single tax; still another was Edward Bellamy, the author of the well known book Looking Backward. Mazzini, the Italian patriot, exercised a strong influence upon him. Still another influence was Karl Marx; and finally there was Tolstoi, with his social Utopianism and pacifism.

Religious influences were Schleiermacher, and more particularly, Ritschl, whose works he encountered in Germany. Rauschenbusch echoes what Ritschl had said about Schleiermacher and Kant and their connection with the rediscovery of this term, "the kingdom of God", and adds: "Ritschl has done more than anyone else to put the idea in the front in German theology, but he does not get beyond a few great general ideas. He was born too early to get sociological ideas." In other words, Ritschl had the idea of the

kingdom of God as being a great ethical conception in which Christianity eventuated, and which was the spearhead of Christianity's attack upon the world; yet Ritschl, who had the idea, did not come down to cases because he did not know about sociology, says Rauschenbusch.

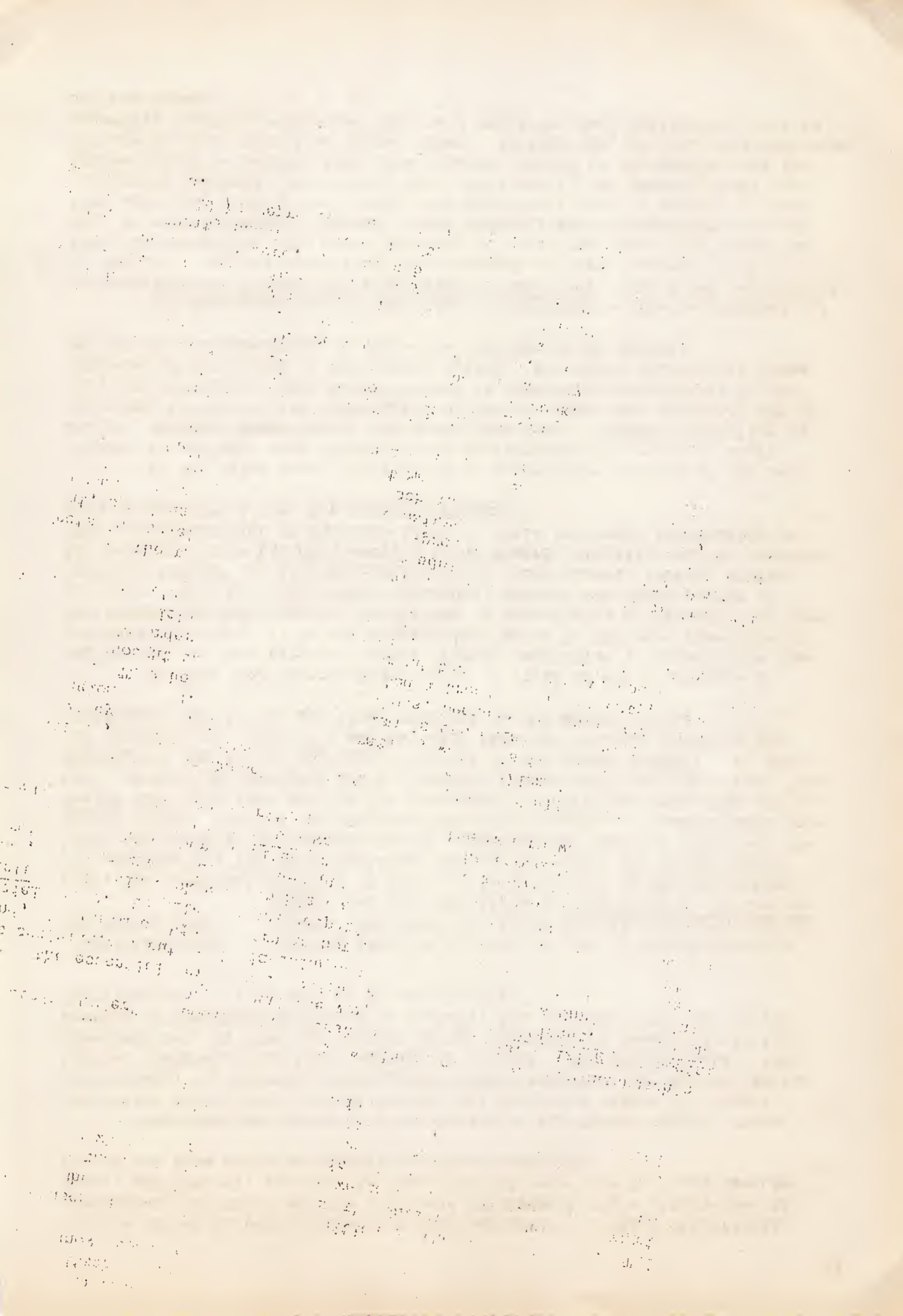
Rauschenbusch gives us a definition of the Social Gospel. This definition shows how he stands between the Christian stream of thought, particularly the American development we have been tracing, and the sociological ideas which he found wanting in Ritschl. The Social Gospel, says Rauschenbusch, is "the application of the teachings of Jesus and the total message of Christian salvation to society, the economic life, and social institutions . . . as well as to individuals."

"Christianizing the Social Order" We have time for a glance at two of Rauschenbusch's books. The first is called Christianizing the Social Order; and the very title is significant. On the one hand, the essential activity in which he is interested is Christianizing--not socializing, but Christianizing--the social order; and on the other hand, the realm of his concern is not primarily the immortal soul, but the social order. Despite its preoccupation with economics, Rauschenbusch protested that this book was (in his own words) "a religious book from end to end", whereas the economic order presented (these again are his words) "the strategical key to the spiritual conquest of the modern world". Is this not interesting? Here is a man who says that the economic order is the strategical key to the spiritual conquest of the modern world!

In this book Rauschenbusch gives us first of all a critique of capitalism, on four primary counts. First, capitalism is essentially competitive by nature; it is not cooperative, which is the very character of the kingdom of God. Second, capitalism is essentially dictatorial and monopolistic. This he finds rather anomalous, because the whole course of American thought and life has manifested a trend toward liberty, whereas the economic order has manifested a trend toward authority; and he considers this a contradiction in American ideals. (This is rather interesting in view of Myrdal's title, The American Dilemma.)

In the third place, capitalism is destructive because of its evil effects in society--such things as the adulteration of products, short weight, spurious advertising, and over-production. Fourth, capitalism is dangerous because of its mammonistic nature--it makes men servants, not of God, but of Mammon. Here Rauschenbusch is referring particularly to the interest of capitalism in the profit motive. Men build their whole lives around what is essentially a false and anti-Christian motive.

The Requirements of a Christian Social Order.-- The requirements of a Christian social order are also given in this book. The first requirement is justice. Justice means (and Rauschenbusch is very concrete about it) that, in connection with great holdings of land, the single tax should be used to rectify things. Second, where property was a collective accumulation belonging jointly to a group, the individual must be related to this collective ownership in a viable way. This meant, for example, that job tenure should be secure, that sick benefits should be dependable, and that old age security should be looked after. In this way, he felt, old-fashioned ownership could be reproduced even in a world of great collectives such as our age shows.



The third requirement of a Christian social order is industrial democracy, by which Rauschenbusch meant that men should be approximately equal. For instance, he was against inheritance of power and wealth because it started some men off under handicaps and other men with advantages denied to their fellows. The fourth requirement was cooperation--cooperation between workers in the form of unions, cooperation between businessmen in the form of large-scale production which would not use up the energies of society in competition--although he recognized that, because of the profit motive, these large-scale aggregates of industrial power were dangerous in a new way, and that one overcame competition at the price of threats to social liberty and industrial security.

The measures Rauschenbusch recommended to secure the above values were, first of all, conservation of life; that is, life must be conserved by limiting the hours of the working day. Also, we must have minimum wages; we must reduce industrial accidents and disease; we must have adequate housing, and protection in old age. The second measure by which he would gain this Christian social order was the socialization of natural monopolies and necessities, such as coal, iron, watersheds, and harbors. (Christian socialism, indeed! This is native American socialism!)

In the third place, this Christian social order would be secured by the rise of the working class. Rauschenbusch said (these are his actual words), the "banner of the Kingdom of God will have to be carried by the tramping hosts of labor." He really believed that there was a superior virtue in the laboring group, and a wisdom and insight in their leadership denied to other elements in society.

"A Theology for the Social Gospel" That will have given you some idea of Rauschenbusch's program; the other book to which I referred gives the principles which animated this program. This other book was entitled A Theology for the Social Gospel. The very title is interesting; it suggests that we have the gospel--what we now need is a theology for it! (In other words, the order is first the gospel, then the theology.) And he writes this very thing; he says: "We have a social gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it."

Rauschenbusch does not deny the need for a theology; he does not deny the existence of a historical tradition of theology. The problem he sees is that of revising this historical tradition so as to make room for the new interest, and rearranging all the old elements so that they will be related constructively to this new element. So he writes: "The book offers concrete suggestions how some of the most important sections of doctrinal theology may be expanded and readjusted [readjusted, indeed!] to make room for the religious convictions summed up in 'the social gospel'."

The Application of the Idea of the Kingdom of God

It is impossible for us to trace all of these "readjustments" (gentle word!) in detail, but we have time to look at one doctrine in this book, and one way in which Rauschenbusch attempted to rethink the world of Christian theology. This doctrine that we choose is, incidentally, the one that was most important to him. He writes:

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"To those whose minds live in the social gospel, the Kingdom of God is a dear truth, the marrow of the gospel, just as the incarnation was to Athanasius, justification by faith alone to Luther, and the sovereignty of God to Jonathan Edwards. It was just as dear to Jesus."

The reason why the doctrine of the kingdom of God was so important to Rauschenbusch can be seen at once. "This doctrine," he writes, "is itself the social gospel. Without it, the idea of redeeming the social order will be but an annex to the orthodox conception of the scheme of salvation." Consequently, he goes on, "If theology is to offer an adequate doctrinal basis for the social gospel, it must not only make room for the doctrine of the Kingdom of God but give it a central place and revise all other doctrines so that they will articulate organically with it." To sum this up, we may say that the kingdom of God was not only an important doctrine for Rauschenbusch, but was the central doctrine, and that all other doctrines had to be rearranged around it as the new center.

The Doctrine in Detail With this in mind, we turn to a closer examination of this one doctrine to see what Rauschenbusch had to say about it. The first point he makes is: "The Kingdom of God is divine in origin, progress, and consummation." I shall read a few of his words to serve as commentary upon this point. The kingdom of God, he holds,

"was initiated by Jesus Christ, in whom the prophetic spirit came to its consummation; it is sustained by the Holy Spirit, and it will be brought to its fulfillment by the power of God in his own time. The passive and active resistance of the Kingdom of Evil at every stage of its advance is so great, and the human resources of the Kingdom of God are so slender, that no explanation can satisfy a religious mind which does not see the power of God in its movements. The Kingdom of God, therefore, is miraculous all the way.... The establishment of a community of righteousness in mankind is just as much a saving act of God as the salvation of an individual.... This doctrine is absolutely necessary to establish ... organic union between religion and morality.... Without this doctrine we shall have expositions of schemes of redemption and we shall have schemes of ethics."

In a word, the thing that brought ethics and religion together was this "bridge doctrine" of the kingdom of God. I call to your attention particularly that dark note of his which says that "the human resources . . . are so slender, that no explanation can satisfy a religious mind which does not see the power of God" in it. In other words, if we had to count on the power of men, says even this advocate of the social gospel, we would not be in very good case. We depend here upon God.

The second thing Rauschenbusch says about the kingdom is that it contains the teleology of the Christian religion. It is the idea of the kingdom of God which makes Christianity dynamic; the kingdom of God is that "one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves", and without it Christianity tends to be static and to have a backward look of preservation--preserving the doctrine and the liturgical foundation--rather than to have any constructive, forward-looking view.

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In the third place, the kingdom of God is both present and future. In a rather interesting turn of phrase, Rauschenbusch says, "Like God, it is in all tenses." In its present it is a task, and unless a man turns his hand to this task he cannot be said to believe in the kingdom of God. But it is future as a gift and as a promise, and it turns men's eyes longingly towards a better day.

In the fourth place, in the thought of Rauschenbusch, the kingdom of God is connected inextricably with the Person of Christ. It is no general idea of social betterment; it is a specifically Christian thing: it is Christ who inaugurated this expectation, gave it its final shape, and left upon it the imprint of his personality. So, says Rauschenbusch, we are not really talking about the kingdom of God in a proper sense unless we speak in a very specifically Christian way.

Again, "the Kingdom of God" (these are Rauschenbusch's actual words, and they are important) "is humanity organized according to the will of God." I want to stop with that point for a few moments. Rauschenbusch says that the kingdom of God tends toward "a social order which will guarantee to all persons their freest and highest development." Furthermore, the kingdom of God (these also are his words) "implies a progressive reign of love in human affairs." Moreover, the kingdom of God involves a surrender of rights, rather than a standing upon them; and above all, a surrender of the right to exploit one's weaker brethren. Fourth, the kingdom of God tends toward the progressive unity of mankind. These are all considerations connected with this great belief of his that the kingdom of God is "humanity organized according to the will of God."

Then Rauschenbusch presses on and says that the kingdom of God is the purpose for which the Church exists, and therefore it is the criterion of the Church. It was very important to his thought that when the idea of the kingdom of God faded away after New Testament times, the idea of the Church took its place; the Church, therefore, had nothing to judge it, but was its own judge of its success or failure. Rauschenbusch felt that we would have a much healthier situation if we held above the Church the great, consummate notion of the kingdom of God as judge of the Church's performance.

Again, he teaches that there must be a synthesis between personal salvation and the kingdom of God; but this is a problem that needs a great deal of working on. (He devotes a chapter in this book to that all-important question.) Finally, he holds that the kingdom of God is not confined within the limits of the Church and its activities. So he writes:

"It embraces the whole of human life. It is the Christian transfiguration of the social order. The Church is one social institution alongside of the family, the industrial organization of society, and the state. The Kingdom of God is in all these, and realizes itself through them all.... The Church is indispensable to the religious education of humanity and to the conservation of religion, but the greatest future awaits religion in the public life of humanity."

And to these prophetic words of his I might subjoin almost the last words of the New Testament: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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...the Lord is with me, and I will be safe.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific information required.

1940

17 December 1950

THE PROPHETIC CHARACTER OF MARXISM

by Dr. A.T. Mollegen*

Introduction: The Unity of Communism

I have been instructed by my colleague, Professor Stanley, for whom I am pinch-hitting, to discuss the relationship between Marxism and the prophetic tradition which you have been studying as it made itself manifest in the Old Testament and in the Reformation, and which you will be studying as it makes itself manifest in modern secularism other than in Communism.

Marxism is, in the broadest sense of the word, a religion; it is a metaphysic (a materialist philosophy); it is a philosophy of history; it is a sociology; a political science; and an economic analysis and program. And it is all of these things in a unity. That is what gives it its great power. We are concerned with it primarily as a religion, a philosophy of history, and a metaphysic, for it is from this side that it derives from the prophetic tradition of Judaism and Christianity.

Three Sources of Marxism

Biblical Christianity as a General Climate	This derivation is evident as coming from three different sources. Marxism and Karl Marx appeared in Western civilization; and there is nothing in Western civilization that does not derive, directly or indirectly, from Biblical Christianity. There is no thought and no institution which would be what it is today, or what it has been in recent history, if it were not for the influence of the Bible. This is true even of the despair of Western man. That despair is deeper and more meaningless than the despair of any men or any period of history prior to this, precisely because it has known and lost Christian substance and Christian hope. This is also true of our new paganisms. The neopaganism of Nazism was far more demonic and brutal and terroristic because it had to drive itself consciously against the Christian substance of our culture. This forced it into deeper opposition to the good than any pre-Christian paganism ever knew.
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Everything in the West derives, in one way or another, from the Biblical tradition, and this is of course true of Marx. The very fact that Marxism is a philosophy of history means that it derives from propheticism, for no one who is not affected by some great prophetic religious tradition is concerned with history. That which we know as history is for non-prophetic peoples merely the manifestation of general principles of nature --something to be borne ultimately either in melancholy patience or heroic defiance, or to be fled from by mystical ascent from the material, the natural, and the changing. The fact that Marx is concerned with history, and that he has a philosophy of history, is testimony to the fact that as a Western man he derives from the propheticism of the Bible.

* Because of a conflicting engagement, Dr. Stanley asked Dr. Mollegen to prepare and deliver this lecture.

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2. The second part outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze financial data, including direct observation, interviews, and the use of statistical models. It highlights the challenges associated with data collection in different contexts and provides recommendations for improving data quality.

3. The third part focuses on the interpretation of results and the drawing of conclusions from the collected data. It discusses the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research to address identified gaps in knowledge.

4. Finally, the document concludes by summarizing the key findings and their implications for policy-making and practice. It stresses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of interventions over time.

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李德胜	男	35	河北	工人	天津	
张德胜	男	25	山西	工人	天津	
赵德胜	男	15	河南	工人	天津	
刘德胜	男	55	陕西	工人	天津	
孙德胜	男	40	四川	工人	天津	
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1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

In other courses in this "theological college for laymen", we have traced the influence of the Bible upon Western civilization. We have pointed out that Western man, from the time of the thirteenth century, had a completely new cultural consciousness as compared to that of any other men who ever lived. If you asked such a man why he found himself in a new relationship to what we call physical nature, to time, and to history--and to the future--he would answer that all of this has come about because he has a new relationship with God. The almighty God, the Creator of all that is, who sustains all existence moment by moment, has in his spontaneous love descended from the heights of deity, become man, and died to effect a new relationship with himself for man. Through this effected new relationship the personal influence of God as Holy Spirit has flowed in a new way, and has created in history a community of the Holy Spirit, a Body of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church. In this sphere of the Holy Spirit, this community of people, we may understand our true relationship to the subhuman creation, to the past and the future life, and to one another. It is here alone that the meaning of history can be discerned.

That is the answer given by Western man in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries about why he is different from all other men. I believe myself that that answer is correct, although many secular historians have tried to go behind that answer and to explain why man became Christian man in terms of the climate, and special racial characteristics, and geographical positions.

Hegel's Rationalization of Christianity Marx is a Westerner, and he derives generally from Biblical religion in this respect. But Marx also was an Hegelian, and he derives from prophetic religion through Hegel, directly and quite consciously. The philosophy of history with which we are concerned here almost exclusively was simply a secularization and a rationalization of the Christian understanding of history. Hegel was not possible without a background of Christianity.

You will remember the Hegelian philosophy of history, as it has been popularized (and it is only with its popularization that we need be concerned tonight): that absolute Spirit, Geist, has an inner necessity to embody itself in world history, in the great groupings of mankind, the cultures and nations which shape the face of the earth--physical nature--to their social structures. Spirit, Geist, therefore drives downward to express itself. It selects great groups of people, and expresses itself through their leaders. It moves from the Orient westward, and from earlier time towards future time, achieving ever new forms of self-expression and self-consciousness in the field of history.

Hegel had no reason to assume that absolute Spirit has an inherent necessity of descent. He derives this quite unconsciously from the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. That God is a God who descends and embodies himself in history is a Biblical doctrine, the culminating point of which is in the Christian doctrine of God become man in Christ. In Hegel's atmosphere, which was a Christian atmosphere, this was the conception of God; and Hegel simply assumed it as the principle by which history was explained.

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J. J. O'Connell

For Hegel, this embodiment of absolute Spirit proceeded by a dialectical movement. (Perhaps the simplest translation of "dialectic" is "a contradictory, zigzagging movement.") The absolute Spirit embodies itself in one group of people, one culture, through certain great leaders. Since the absolute can never be totally embodied, however, it seeks expression for that aspect of itself which has not yet been embodied, embodying itself in another movement which contradicts the first self-expression. Spirit creates a thesis, then an antithesis, and unites them in a synthesis, which itself becomes a new thesis, faced by a new antithesis, and making possible a new synthesis, which becomes the thesis for another dialectical movement. Thus history is a series of zigzags from polar extremes to polar extremes, with syntheses emerging out of the prior contradictions; and it moves always to higher and higher self-expressions of absolute Spirit.

Marx was quite consciously an Hegelian, but what he did was to say that this Spiritual interpretation of history was quite wrong. Hegel was upside down, and it was the vocation of Marx to put Hegel back upon his feet. Actually, it was Marx who turned Hegel upside down, but Marx regarded this as the position Hegel should have been in at the beginning! May I read you a quotation from Marx about his relationship to Hegel (this is in his Das Kapital, 2nd German edition, volume I, page 873, quoted by J.M. Cameron in his great little book, Scrutiny of Marxism); Marx wrote: "For Hegel, the thought process is the demiurge [that is, the creator] of the real. In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and collected inside the human head." Cameron continues with the comment--a paraphrase of Marx--that "the dialectical movement of history is a fact, but it is a dialectic of material forces reflected in the human mind."

Marx said that the Idea (Geist) of Hegel was simply the reflection of the factual process of history itself; that the dialectic of Hegel, which was a dialectic between transcendent Spirit and history, was simply the reflection of a dialectical movement which went on within history itself, just as the ideas in the human mind are simply reflections of the social processes which move man in history. Engels said this same thing about Hegel in a much more elaborate and lengthy way. He wrote of what he and Marx had done to Hegel as follows:

"Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, one started out from his revolutionary side ... from the dialectical method. But in its Hegelian form this method was unusable. According to Hegel, dialectics is the self-development of the concept [that is, the Idea]. The absolute concept does not only exist--where unknown--from eternity, it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world. It develops into itself through all the preliminary stages which are treated at length in The Logic [one of Hegel's books], and which are all included in it. Then it 'alienates' itself by changing into nature, where, without consciousness of itself, disguised as the necessity of nature, it goes through a new development and finally comes again to self-consciousness in man. This self-consciousness then elaborates itself again in history from the crude form until finally the absolute concept again comes to itself completely in the Hegelian philosophy. According to Hegel, therefore, the dialectical development apparent in nature and history, i.e., the causal interconnection of the progressive

movement from the lower to the higher, which asserts itself through all zigzag movements and temporary setbacks, is only a miserable copy of the self-movement of the concept going on from eternity, no one knows where, but at all events independently of any thinking human brain. This ideological reversal had to be done away with. We comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically--as images of real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of development of the absolute concept. Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion--both of the external world and of human thought--two sets of laws which are identical in substance, but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously in the form of external necessity in the midst of an endless series of seeming accidents. Thereby the dialectic of the concept itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and the dialectic of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing before, and placed upon its feet again."

(Ludwig Feuerbach, in Burns, Handbook of Marxism, pp. 223-24.)

So you can see how Marx derives from Biblical propheticism directly through Hegel's rationalized and secularized version of Biblical philosophy of history and Biblical doctrine of God.

Apocalyptic Propheticism and the Western Dream But on a third side, Marx was a Jew; he therefore had a racial inheritance (by "race" I mean, of course, sociological, not physiological, race) of struggle for justice which was deeply concerned with philosophy of history and with the future and goal of history. Baron von Hügel was, so far as I know, the first great scholar to discern that the framework of Karl Marx's thought and of Communism is the framework of Jewish apocalyptic.

In order to put this as simply as we must in so brief a time, let me do it under the pattern of three ages--a pattern which is so characteristic of Biblical thought and of Christian thought, as well as of late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century modern secular thought.

One might, without too much distortion, present the Biblical philosophy of history in terms of its conception of the three ages. There is the age of history itself, which begins with the Fall of mankind. The Garden of Eden can be called pre-history: a non-historical, primordial time --Urgeschichte. History is a time of sin, disruption, and cataclysmic conflict of man with man, due, according to the Bible, to man's alienation and separation from God. This has caused his alienation and separation from his true self, from true fellowship, and from the true purpose for which he exists.

But, according to the Bible, God has not abdicated because man sins; therefore God takes the very movements of human sin in history and overrules them, using them for his own purposes, and prepares for a new relationship of man to himself. He does this by the living Word of God spoken by the prophet, who interprets the living actions of God in the history of the people. The Word interpreting the act is always the prophetic message.

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The Three Ages in Pre-Exilic Prophecy.-- May I illustrate this in terms of the pre-Exilic prophets. Their unremitting message is that sin has alienated the people from God, and has warped and distorted their soil and their society, to such a degree that doom is the inevitable result. God shall destroy them. "The end is come upon my people." "You are like a basket of summer fruit." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." And the other textual reading of Jeremiah's great saying is in substance the same: "It is too late; there is no possibility of turning; it's all over. The divine doom must fall inexorably."

Very few people believed the prophets; they preferred to believe the false prophets who said, "Peace, peace! Everything is going to be all right; God will take care of his people. Perform the ritual sacrifices; God will stand by you." The true prophet always said to the false prophets, "You say, 'Peace, peace!' where there is no peace. You prophesy a day which is a day of illumination and triumph for the people; but the day of the Lord shall be darkness and not light."

But a few people did believe the prophets and responded to the Word of God as it was spoken by the prophets. That there were some people who responded is testified to by the fact that we have the literature of the prophets themselves. Somebody believed them; somebody saved what they prophesied; somebody wrote down what they had said.

With the last two of the great pre-Exilic prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, this group that responds becomes explicit in prophetic doctrine itself--it appears as the doctrine of the Remnant. Isaiah and Jeremiah see that this responding group, this group which has accepted the prophetic message and is aware of the coming judgment unto destruction of the nation, shall survive as a religious group--it is the Holy Remnant. It is therefore the true Chosen People; it is the true Israel; the true Children of Abraham and of Jacob; it is "the people of God" which God intended. Hence, as a religious group (not as individual special lives, but as a cohesive social group), they shall survive the catastrophe.

The great mass of people did not believe this until what the prophetic word had predicted happened--until the Northern Kingdom was destroyed. (The date we ordinarily fix for the fall of the Northern Kingdom is about 722 B.C.--that is approximately when Samaria fell--and 586 B.C. for the fall of Jerusalem.) When the bludgeoning stroke of judgment had actually come, then the people responded. When the Word of God in the prophet and the act of God in history coalesced, the people that were formed out of this gathered round and incorporated themselves into the Remnant, constituting Judaism. The Jews were created in history. Judaism came out of the Exile--a new religion; one which accepted prophetic religion as a basis, attempted to codify it, and tried to reform the ritual in its light. The Hebrew peoples went into the Exile a culture-religion under the criticism of prophetic religion, and came out with Judaistic religion founded upon the prophets.

A great downward movement of God by word and act, and a great dialectical transformation through judgment and destruction, brought a new people into being, purging away the old Israel, leaving the Remnant, and purifying it as the nucleus for the new Israel that would emerge beyond the Exile.

[illegible]

But the Remnant was not the perfect people; and the pre-Exilic prophets' expectation was not fulfilled. They hoped that after the return from the Exile there would be the perfect time under God--the perfect king, and the great Messianic time--when there would be an abundance for all. The greatest prophets hoped that the homage and worship of the Gentiles would come to their God, and that the Jews would become a priestly people among the Gentiles. This did not happen.

The Three Ages in Apocalyptic Prophecy.-- History itself, therefore, became a criticism of the optimism of the pre-Exilic prophetic expectation. Hebrew prophecy was not profound enough; and to meet this there came a new revelation of God in Apocalyptic Religion. You will remember that it was in Apocalyptic literature that the Jewish tradition was driven deeper into an understanding of the sin of the human heart, the "evil imagination" (the yetzer hara, which becomes "original sin"--that's the phrase in St. Augustine). The conception originates in Apocalyptic. Again, it was in Apocalyptic Religion that the mighty forces of history were understood to have an inner character and structure of evil, the symbol for which was the fallen angelic powers. In this way a new and deeper interpretation of history, and a new and deeper interpretation of the sin of the human heart, was given.

But Apocalyptic, like Propheticism, expected the coming of God. Therefore the coming of the Kingdom of God, the ultimate and final "good age", while it was much more catastrophical, was regarded as absolutely certain. When it came it would transfigure physical nature so that, as in the later and somewhat apocalyptic post-Exilic prophets, even the animal world would be transformed: the leopard would lie down with the lamb; and a little child should play upon the hole of the asp and not get stung; and there should no longer be any hurt in God's holy mountain. All the conflict and self-destruction even in physical nature would be withdrawn, and all would be peace and harmony.

So also, in later Apocalyptic, there would be the transfiguration of the human body; the dead would be raised, and we should have a new kind of body more appropriate to and more expressive of the new being which God would give us by the might of his transforming action. It is from this period of Apocalyptic that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body comes.

The Three Ages in the New Testament.-- It was in Christianity that the good news that this new age had already begun was proclaimed. The Son of Man, the Messiah, the Heavenly One from the transcendent order coming upon clouds of glory, had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. By the mighty action of his suffering and death he had reconciled man to God; and the Spirit of God had flooded into history and begun to give man this new eschatological being--a being which was not a possibility for sinful man. A new supernatural transfiguration of human nature had actually begun in history. Again you have the prophetic word, now in the Apocalyptists, who expected a new act of God, which Christianity asserts was done when the Word became flesh in Christ, creating a new holy Remnant--this time the Christian Church.

The first stage is the preparatory stage--the preliminary movement of God toward the great central act by which he brings history to a new

stage. The second stage is the stage of the transfiguration in history, the Church; and the third is the culmination which lies beyond all natural and human possibilities--that is, in Christianity, the Second Coming of Christ, the end of the world, the new heavens and the new earth.

If we take these three ages--the Old Testament age of preparation, we might say, the Christian age (the age of the Church), and the final consummation--and pursue the history of these three ages in the West, we can see their relevance to Marxism.

The Three Ages in Augustine and Catholicism.-- In the great Bishop of Hippo, St. Augustine, the second age (the Christian age--the age of the Church) was identified with the thousand-year reign of Christ in the Book of Revelation. Therefore, for all Catholic philosophy of history which proceeds from Augustine (and it all does, including that of official Roman Catholicism today, which comes from Augustine through St. Thomas Aquinas), there is expected no new and better time in history before the end. Any better future in history will derive from the Christianization of the culture by the Catholic Church.

Augustine's philosophy of history actually attempts to stop the dynamics of history--to stop progress, to baptize and to render static, to purify and Christianize, that which is. All Augustinian philosophies of history are therefore ecclesiastical and conservative. This completely explains the Middle Ages in their attitude towards history.

The Three Ages in Joachim of Floris.-- It was in Joachim of Floris, the Cistercian abbot of a monastery, that this Augustinian philosophy of history was broken through, and the modern mind began to emerge. Joachim also used a three-age philosophy of history: the age of the Father (the synagogue period); the age of the Son (the ecclesiastical, Catholic, institutional period--the Church period); and the age of the Holy Spirit, which was supposed to begin in 1260 A.D. (about 58 years after his own death in 1202).

This age of the Holy Spirit had as its content a perfect monastic order; and the Franciscan movement said, "We're it!" The Spirituals--the radical Franciscans--applied this three-age philosophy of history to themselves, and regarded themselves as the nucleus of the new age of the Holy Spirit. From this standpoint they criticized the hierarchical Catholic Church as something belonging to the past. God's new age would soon dawn, and this Church would disappear; it belonged only to a temporary period of history, the second age.

From this turning of Western man's spirit towards the future in the expectation of a new and better age within the framework of history and within the possibilities of human nature itself, all modern conceptions of history derive. From this turn toward the future comes the whole idea of progress in history--an idea so characteristic of Western man and so completely and utterly lacking in any other cultures except those few which have had the touch of prophetic religion upon them, like Zoroastrianism, and the flicker of prophecy in ancient Egypt.

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The Three Ages in Comte.-- This same three-age view of history was given a secular expression in Auguste Comte. He had a theological age, which he subdivided into three periods; his second age was the metaphysical or philosophical age; and the third was the age of positivism, or experimental empirical science. And each cultural period decided by a prophetic judgment on the criteria by which it would apply this three-age doctrine.

For Auguste Comte the most wonderful thing that had ever happened, the thing that gave the life of mankind the greatest promise, was the coming of empirical experimental science. Therefore that became normative. The theological age became only a mythological age which men would outgrow; the philosophical age was a little better than that because it believed in man's rational powers, but it was abstract and deductive rather than concrete and inductive, so it was an age to be outgrown. But when empirical science came, this was the real truth, and we were launched upon the road to perfection, surely and certainly.

The Three Ages in Marxism.-- In Marx these three ages are still present, and they are very definitely influenced by the Biblical conceptions. Marx, too, has his pre-history--the Marxian equivalent of the Garden of Eden was primitive communism. In the mid-nineteenth century nobody knew much about primitive society; the whole great study of primitivism, of ethnology, had not proceeded very far. But after the turn of the half-century, Karl Marx discovered the American, Henry Morgan. Marx took almost everything Morgan said as being absolute truth from the standpoint of sociology because it fitted in so perfectly with Marx's own pattern; and Engels continued this after Marx died.

Their picture of primitive communism is a picture of an idyllic, innocent time when men were in no way divided against men. Everything was owned in common; there was no private property. There was no coercion of one group by another; therefore there was no State; and there was no differentiation of function save that which was necessary by reason of difference of sex and the difference between adults and children.

Then came the Fall, which was the beginning of history; and here Marx's Jewish background comes into play. You remember that in the Book of Genesis one of the earliest manifestations of the sin of the Fall is the rise of civilization, which comes by reason of the nomadic hunter's invasion and overthrow of the peaceful agricultural people. Nimrod the hunter, ruler of Babylon, becomes one of the first founders of cities. For Marx, civilization comes with the first differentiation of functions among the primitive communist people. The invention of the instruments of production enables one class to use its power to exploit the other classes; and therefore history is begun.

Marx was an Hegelian, and Hegel stemmed from Kant, and both Hegel and Kant thought that the Fall was not only a fall but also a rise--it was a fall from innocence into self-consciousness, and that was good. So for Marx this differentiation of human society into classes begins the class struggle, which moves by zigzags to increasingly higher levels, to culminate in the great, final, catastrophic salvation. All this, then, is the preparatory period, in Marx's philosophy of history; and the Communist Manifesto opens with the words, "All past history is the history of class

struggles." Once Marx actually said that history really begins with the end of bourgeois capitalism--"the pre-history of human society comes to a close." (Burns, page 373.)

The culmination of this preparatory period comes with the victory of the bourgeoisie and the coming of modern capitalist society, about which Marx is tremendously complimentary. No class ever did such wonderful things as the bourgeoisie has done; and the most wonderful thing done is to prepare for its own destruction! May I read you at some length about this final preparation for the catastrophic salvation that shall come (this is from the Communist Manifesto):

"The bourgeoisie historically has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors' and has left no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous cash payment. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value; and in place of the numberless, indefeasible, chartered freedoms, has set up that single unconscionable freedom, free trade. In one word, for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. [One has to remember the condition of the industrial proletariat in the mid-nineteenth century in England, Germany, and France if one is to get any sense of the reality of that description.]

"The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe; it has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers."

(To make a footnote comment: If you are interested in pursuing the psychological effects of modern capitalism on man in making even the professional man--the lawyer, the priest, the physician, the poet, the man of science--a wage-laborer, read Erich Fromm's great book, Man for Himself; and his study of the marketing personality. "The Huckster" becomes the typical modern man. Human life and its services become commodities; then we begin to sell not only our services but ourselves. Our personality becomes a thing to be sold, and seeks chameleon-like to take on the color of that which is wanted. Thus the self is rendered empty behind its many faces, and in its emptiness collapses into neuroticism. Or you might read Karen Horney's book, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time, where she points out that a neurosis in modern capitalist culture is quite different from what a neurosis would have been in the Middle Ages, for instance.)

"The bourgeoisie," said Marx, "has torn away from the family its sentimental veil and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation." Here Marx was talking about what he regarded as the characteristic bourgeois marriage of the mid-nineteenth century. Moreover, Marx maintained, the bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production and thereby the relations of production, and with them all the relations of society. The bourgeois class, with its

1. The first group of people who are interested in the study of the history of the world are the historians. They are people who study the past and try to understand what happened and why it happened. They use a variety of sources, including books, documents, and artifacts, to reconstruct the past. They also try to understand the people who lived in the past and how they thought and felt. Historians are interested in the past for a variety of reasons. Some are interested in the past because they want to know what happened and why it happened. Others are interested in the past because they want to understand the people who lived in the past and how they thought and felt. Still others are interested in the past because they want to learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future.

industrial revolution, must always be perfecting the machine and creating new industrial products; and as it does this, it is always forcing society into great social transformations.

The social transformation most evident in our time is the almost fantastic mobility of the American people--their uprooting from soil and community, and their moving all over the face of our nation. That is a terrific social transformation. Another one, of course, is that the tremendous advances in medicine have prolonged human life to such a degree that a new sociological problem--what to do with old people--has arisen. It has assumed such colossal proportions that we had a government conference about it last summer. This is a completely new sociological problem.

Now the complimentary side:

"The bourgeoisie during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground--what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?"

This was the role and vocation of the bourgeois class, as this inner principle of history unfolds itself, as this dialectic of history moves toward its final great climax. The inevitability of the crisis is described by Marx from two standpoints, one of which is an abstract and economic standpoint. Marx says it is the nature of the capitalist system to produce more goods than it can distribute; therefore there is an inner contradiction by which it makes inevitable the replacing of itself--it comes to a crisis. But, put in more concrete terms, it is the nature of capitalist economy to destroy all classes between the owning class and the industrial labor class, the workers. Marx saw going on in his own time the complete destruction of what we would call the middle classes; he believed that their disappearance from history would take place very rapidly. (It didn't happen that way--Marx was dead wrong here as a sociologist and an economist. But that is another matter; it is not on that level that we are concerned with him.)

The result would be, as Marx understood it, that history was moving very rapidly to the production of two classes which would be in bitter class struggle: the bourgeoisie (the owning class), and the proletariat. The proletariat would be increasingly treated as a commodity; it would be employed only when the owning class needed people as workers; therefore the life of the workers would be rendered increasingly more insecure, they would be driven into deeper and deeper poverty, and they would become greater in number and deeper in resentment.

It is this proletariat that Marx proclaims as the chosen people of the revolutionary salvation which is to come. Here he goes back--quite unconsciously--to the Biblical idea that it is always the poor man, the victim of society, the social pariah, who can see the evils of that society more nearly as God sees them. It was not for nothing that the incarnation of the Son of God was among the peasantry and not the nobility. It is not

for nothing that his Beatitudes begin "Blessed are the poor ...". It was not for nothing that the people who responded to the prophets were the economically poor as well as the religiously pious, in the days of Isaiah and the days in which the Psalms were written.

Because the proletariat, said Marx, is totally outside of society and is totally a victim of society, it alone can overthrow this society and replace it. But it was the nature of bourgeois society to produce a proletariat which was powerful enough, and which was set against the bourgeois class with a strong enough revolutionary will, actually to overthrow bourgeois society. Therefore the dialectic of history makes it inevitable that the proletariat will revolt and will come into power.

Marx here becomes the equivalent of the Old Testament prophet; he considers himself the word of truth. For the first time, he claims, he has by empirical science discerned the true meaning of history; he has grasped the inner dialectical movement of history. He is therefore able to discern the chosen people--the proletariat--and to issue the prophetic summons which calls them into self-conscious obedience to their vocation in history under the dialectical principle. So he speaks to the proletariat, makes it self-conscious of its vocation, and summons it into action; and those who respond become the leaders of the revolutionary proletariat.

The revolution comes just at the right time: that is, it can come only at a certain stage of decay, when the inner contradictions of capitalism work themselves out, and when the proletariat is self-consciously organized to seize the opportunity. This is the Marxian version (a secular version) of the idea of divine election--the chosen people. The proletariat is the "greater Israel" out of which the Remnant is called; but the Remnant is the leadership of the proletariat, to bring it to power.

When the revolution takes place, it does so within the old order; therefore the institutions of the old order must be used to a certain extent. When the revolutionary group seizes power, they seize a bourgeois State; and they must preserve and use the bourgeois State as long as any vestiges of the old sinful bourgeois order last. They use the State for the destruction of the bourgeois institutions and of the bourgeois class itself; they use the State for socializing the economy, educating the people, and promoting the world revolution.

This period of history is "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", sometimes called "the socialist stage of history"; it is the stage of history in which Russia now is and in which, according to Communist doctrine, it will remain for a long time (because, of course, so long as there is any capitalist power to threaten them, they cannot go into the final stage). This is the Marxian equivalent of the thousand-year reign of Christ through his saints in the Book of Revelation, or of the Catholic Church in Augustine--the millennial period.

The Western Dream: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.-- When the world revolution has progressed to its universal proportions, and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat has fulfilled its purposes, then the final Communist stage can come. This is a description of the Communist period of history which shall come at the end of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (it is from the Communist Internationale program):

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"The ultimate aim of the Communist Internationale is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of Communism. Communist society, the basis for which has been prepared by the whole course of historical development, is mankind's only way out [there is no other salvation], for it alone can abolish the contradictions in the capitalist system which threaten to degrade and destroy the human race.

"Communist society will abolish the class division of society; that is, simultaneously with the abolition of anarchy in production, it will abolish all forms of exploitation and oppression of man by man. Society will no longer consist of antagonistic classes in conflict with each other, but will present a united commonwealth of labour. For the first time in its history, mankind will take its fate into its own hands."

Therefore Marx and Engels and all Communists are able to say that man lives under brutal necessity until the Communist revolution comes, and then man begins to live in true freedom--his life is free for the first time. That is why they do not mean what we mean by "freedom" and "democracy"--and we can hardly converse about these with them.

"Instead of destroying innumerable human lives and incalculable wealth in struggles between classes and nations, mankind will devote all its energy to the struggle against the forces of nature, to the development and strengthening of its own collective might. After abolishing private ownership of the means of production, and converting those means into social property, the world system of Communism will replace the elemental forces of the world market, competitive and blind processes of social production, by consciously organized and planned production for the purpose of satisfying rapidly growing social needs. [You see, the needs grow, but the production grows, so everything planes off into a steady rise of a higher standard of living, a greater scientific power over nature, and greater cultural depths and widths.]

"With the abolition of competition and anarchy in production, devastating crises and still more devastating wars will disappear; the sword will be turned into the ploughshare once and for all and finally. Instead of colossal waste of productive forces and spasmodic development of society, there will be a planned utilization of all material resources and a painless economic development on the basis of unrestricted, smooth, and rapid development of productive forces." And it goes on in that way for several pages.

I should like to point to one thing: that this promise begins to soar beyond the range of the possibilities of history, so that there is a whisper that man shall overcome even death!

"The development of the prophetic forces of world Communist society will make it possible to raise the well-being of the whole of humanity and to reduce to a minimum the time devoted to material production, and consequently will enable culture to flourish as never before in history. [Man will need to work less and less in order to get more and more; therefore he will have much greater leisure; and the simple, naive assumption is that, having more leisure, he will enrich culture all the more!]

"This new culture of a humanity that is united for the first time in history and has abolished all State boundaries will, unlike capitalist culture, be based upon clear and transparent human relations. Hence it will bury forever all mysticism, religion, prejudice, and superstition, and will give a powerful impetus to the development of all-conquering scientific knowledge."

This shows how deeply and powerfully Utopian Marxism is. Although it criticizes Utopianism, it is itself, from the Christian standpoint, incredibly and naively Utopian. It is immediately very realistic politically, but it is ultimately very naive and very Utopian.

If one wants to know why Communism has a real claiming power, the key is its great eschatological promise of fulfilling the dream of Western man since the day of his secularization--since his loss of the profundity of the Christian insights. He has dreamed that by his own reason and his own efforts he was finally going to overcome the cleavage and strife of his own existence; unite mankind; have everlasting peace and harmony; and enjoy a steadily rising standard of living with increasing culture. This is the dream of Western man; and Communism has power because it has definitely embraced this dream.

Therefore both Marx and Engels said that Feuerbach's criticism of religion was not enough. Feuerbach explained all religion (as Freud later did) as an illusion, a wish-fulfillment, a projection of what man wanted to be into another world which man thought he would achieve by mystical devotion, by conversion, by church membership, and ultimately by actualization after death. Feuerbach said this other world does not exist; it is simply the wish of man. And Karl Marx said, Yes, but Feuerbach hasn't gone far enough--why does man wish this? Man wishes this because it is his essence; it is what he really is in principle. Therefore everything from the first Fall of mankind, the invention of the instruments of production, and the beginning of the class war, to the Communist revolution is an alienation of man from his true essence.

It is the purpose of the Communist revolution, Marx said, to actualize the essential man, to realize the world which religion projected as another world out of its frustration. Marx was quite frank about it. He said, our difference from the Christian religion is that we set out deliberately to actualize the other world here on earth; our program is to change the face of the earth. And it is this eschatological hope, this religious goal, this prophetic reliance upon the future Utopia which shall come about absolutely certainly because the dialectic of history will actualize it, that is the real power of Marxism.

A Christian Criticism

Finally, let me criticize Marxism on the religious and philosophical level. Marxism claims to be empirical, to be scientific; but as you can see, there is absolutely nothing scientific about its framework. Granting for a moment the hypothesis that Marxism is accurate scientifically (which it is not), there is no way to say from the standpoint of empirical science which of the two struggling classes is the good class and which is the bad; you have to import norms of justice and you have to make decisions. All this

Marx did, but he did it in the framework of a secular prophetic faith, and not out of the factuality that is discerned by empirical science. Therefore all Marxism is haunted by the superficialities of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century secularism; and it is this which shall ultimately destroy it.

There is an intimation of this in something Engels wrote towards the end of his life, which is full of pathos. The dialectic of history which made this culmination inevitable arose out of matter itself; it is a product of nature. J.M. Cameron, whose book I quoted before, writes:

"There is a curious passage in one of Engels' last writings which, if it is taken seriously, qualifies somewhat the optimistic and progressive implications of Historical Materialism as it is usually stated. In it he argues that matter goes through an 'eternal cycle' in which from all eternity and to all eternity organic life and consciousness are being built up and destroyed. The only certainty we have is 'that matter remains eternally the same in all its transformations, that none of its attributes can ever be lost, and therefore also, and with the same iron necessity, that though it will exterminate on the earth its highest creation, the thinking mind, it must somewhere else and at another time again produce it.' This pitiless notion was a commonplace in the ancient world before the coming of Christianity. It is odd to find it associated with what is often thought to be the most extravagantly optimistic of our political doctrines."

There you have a hint of what will inevitably come in Communism, even if it should have its world victory; for there is about man that which cannot be satisfied in terms of this world's framework, and success would only make apparent the deficiencies of the Communist fulfilled dream. Therefore this tragic despair, this ultimate meaninglessness, this sense of standing under a fate that will inevitably grind out all things into nothingness, which comes of living only within the framework of nature and of history, would produce despair in a victorious Communist culture. This is a whisper of things to come that proceeds out of the philosophic basis of Communism.

No God--No Sin --No Salvation	From a Christian standpoint the whole of this great philosophy of life and interpretation of history has a self-destroying flaw: it leaves God out. And when it leaves God out--that is, the concrete, revealed God of the Biblical tradition--then, of course, it does not understand human sin, because there is no way to understand human sin except in the presence of God. Therefore, having no true understanding of original sin, it is completely unaware of its own sin and of the blindness which proceeds from its own sin; and this may destroy it in its conflict with its enemies. It will certainly destroy it if Communism achieves success on a world-wide scale.
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Already the peculiar blindness of Marxism is evident in one of its most tragic mistakes. In order to prepare for defense, it forewent prematurely its conversations with the democracies in the late thirties and made too hasty an alliance with its foe (the non-aggression pact with Nazism). It thereby precipitated the world war, and itself fell victim to Hitler's attack; and it was saved only by renewing its alliance with the Western democratic powers.

1. The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of the project and to outline the key objectives and milestones for the upcoming phase.

2. The project is currently in the planning stage, and the following objectives have been identified:

- To develop a detailed project plan and schedule.
- To identify and allocate resources.
- To establish a communication and reporting structure.

3. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year, and the following milestones have been identified:

- Completion of the project plan and schedule by [date].
- Identification and allocation of resources by [date].
- Establishment of a communication and reporting structure by [date].

4. The project is currently in the planning stage, and the following objectives have been identified:

- To develop a detailed project plan and schedule.
- To identify and allocate resources.
- To establish a communication and reporting structure.

5. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year, and the following milestones have been identified:

- Completion of the project plan and schedule by [date].
- Identification and allocation of resources by [date].
- Establishment of a communication and reporting structure by [date].

6. The project is currently in the planning stage, and the following objectives have been identified:

We also, because we too are deeply secular, have our peculiar blindnesses; but we are not criticizing ourselves at the moment, we are criticizing Marxism.

When God is taken out of the picture, there is no deep awareness of sin. There is no understanding of man's basic malady, which is, of course, always and all the time, original sin. Therefore there is no expectancy of the redemption of God, which comes from beyond all human possibilities. So Marx is forced to make the naive assumption (which comes from Rousseau) that, because man's life is distorted and corrupted by his institutions and by the class struggle itself, then if you can disrupt the institutions of human history and human civilization and form and fashion new institutions, man's life will no longer be corrupted and distorted. Once these institutions are abolished and replaced by good institutions, man's life will grow up undistorted into peace and harmony and infinite progress.

That is the expectation of a miracle that makes all the miracles of conversion by Christ look unmiraculous. It is a tremendously naive assumption. Therefore the Communists have no protection against the corruptions of power which come with the dictatorship of the proletariat. They have no protection against their own self-righteousness. And all of this stems from the absence of the dimension of the transcendent--the dimension of God. So if we can keep them from precipitating a world war, the acids of their own disintegration may finally so weaken them that we can avert at least the most terrible form of war with them.

It is part of Marxian doctrine that capitalism shall seek to destroy Communism before it submits to destruction. The Biblical prophetic tradition expected one final, massive attack of evil upon the forces of God, one last, titanic world struggle (the battle of Armageddon), when the satanic forces shall try to overthrow and destroy all the forces of God. So also for Marxian propheticism, it is absolutely inevitable that the capitalist world will seek to destroy the good socialist-communist world. Armageddon must come. This is just as much a part of their dogma as it is a part of the Southern Fundamentalist Christian's dogma that a literal Armageddon must come because the Bible says so.

It would require a drastic modification of Marxian dogma if we should persuade them that we shall not seek to destroy them. They believe that in our own death-agony, at least, as we begin to collapse through the inner contradictions of capitalism, we shall be forced to drive against them and try to destroy them. They expect that. They interpret everything we do, therefore, from that standpoint. They are afraid, and, as Carl Gustav Jung once said, "In lunatic asylums it is a well-known fact that patients are far more dangerous when suffering from fear than when moved by wrath or hatred." Only those whose meaning of life does not stem finally from their success or their failure in history can escape this dangerous fear.

7 January 1951

PROPHETIC ASPECTS OF MODERN THOUGHT

Tonight I shall present to you five different aspects of modern thought which not only reveal kinship and similarity with the prophetic approach to life, but are actually derived from it. At the same time, I shall present certain differences between the manner in which the prophets applied these elements of thought and the manner in which modern man does so. And wherever such a divergence is presented, I shall also raise the question as to the wisdom of diverging from the prophets in this particular point of view.

Our Belief in the Meaningfulness of History

The first element in which modern thought is strongly similar to prophetic thinking is its belief that history, the course of events, is a revelation point for the truth. For the prophets, the story of human affairs--the panorama of human history--was not only a chosen revelation point, it was the revelation point. Modern man does not use this language--he does not speak of "revelation" so much; but he does hold, to the very roots of his being, the conviction that history is meaningful.

It is hard to say whether the unity of modern thought about the meaningfulness of history is more astonishing than the variety of the ways it is expressed. But, however much men disagree as to the manner in which history is meaningful, they are agreed that it is. This is quite surprising, in view of the ancestry of our thought.

The Greek Preoccupation With Nature	In the Greek strand of our heritage there was little or no interest in history. Aristotle, it is true, had a category known as " <u>kairos</u> ", which was the good under the aspect of time. <u>Kairos</u> was like the climax of a play or the high point in a life development; it was like maturity and the flowering of powers. But while Aristotle looked for the <u>kairos</u> in this series of events and in that aspect of the human story, he never believed that there was a <u>kairos for time as a whole</u> . He would not, for instance, have said that " <u>when the fulness of the time was come</u> " Christ was born in Israel "under the law", as St. Paul has said. For Aristotle there was no high point, no significant, meaningful, climaxing hour for time as a whole.
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The reason for this is very fundamental in Greek thinking. The basic preoccupation of the Greeks was with nature--but not as we understand the word. Both in Greek and in Latin the word "nature" is connected with the verbal root "to be born". "Nature" means anything which is inborn, innate, which comes out of the egg; it means something which is present because it was always there implicitly. Nature means that which abides, that which is ever like itself. The Greeks were not interested in the thing which happens once, which never occurred before, and never will be seen again (and which is the very essence of history); they were interested in that which ever remains like itself.

Consequently, when they looked out upon the world of human things, they were interested in those characteristics where men obviously differ in endowments and powers--the ordinary men who have one talent and little

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1. The first group of people who are interested in the study of the history of the world are the historians. They are people who study the past and try to understand what happened and why it happened. They use a variety of sources, including books, documents, and artifacts, to reconstruct the past. They also try to understand the people who lived in the past and how they thought and felt. Historians are interested in the past for a variety of reasons. Some are interested in the past because they want to know what happened and why it happened. Others are interested in the past because they want to understand the people who lived in the past and how they thought and felt. Still others are interested in the past because they want to learn from the mistakes of the past and avoid them in the future.

power; the men somewhat above them who have higher, richer, and more varied gifts; and finally the geniuses, the demigods, and the heroes. This is hierarchical thinking. It finds its chief, although by no means its only, Greek expression in Neoplatonism, which, together with its Christian reflection in the thought of Dionysius the Areopagite, is the kind of thought that is interested in those things where men differ by birth. One man has few gifts, another has many; and nothing can be done about it except to note the fact and to wonder about it.

Where it leads to action, this "nature-thinking" leads to mystical action: to climbing up the ladder of these degrees until you get to the highest degree, and finally beyond degrees altogether. This kind of thinking leads to speculation. In the classical tradition, "speculation" means not what it means in modern usage (where it refers to idle surmise); it means "to look at". A speculum is a mirror in which you earnestly and fixedly look at something which interests you very much.

The Christian reflection--the religious resultant--of this kind of thinking was the type of thought which regarded the end of life as the Beatific Vision: a sight so blessed that to see it was the very fulfillment of life. This is because things everlastingly are; to look at anything is a great sight; and to look at the highest degree in the ladder of degrees is a sight so rewarding as to constitute the very summum bonum itself.

<p>The Transparency of Events for the Prophets</p>	<p>In the Greek thought we do not have the conviction that historical life is meaningful and significant; yet this is felt by modern man. Therefore, for the source of this feeling we must look to the other strand in our heritage--the Hebrew prophetic background. While man in our day, like the prophets of old, believes that history is essentially significant, he believes it in a somewhat different manner from the prophets; and I should like to point out one or two ways in which our respective outlooks vary.</p>
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Modern man believes that time of itself brings forth. Time, like a pregnant female, brings forth out of its own interior creative capacity the thing which makes it meaningful. Life is inherently meaningful--that is to say, events in and of themselves are such as to satisfy the heart. And man's heart, as he considers the flow of events, is the final criterion of judgment as to whether or not events are good or bad, meaningful or the reverse. This view held by modern man is, of course, a purely immanent reading of the value of things.

The prophet held a view which was not quite so simple. The prophet was, it is true, concerned with the flow of events; but there was something else with which he was concerned much more profoundly: he was concerned with God--with a God whom he approached through events, a God whose interest and whose life was expressed in the flow of events. Therefore the prophet was not interested in the event in and of itself, as isolated. He did not ever think that events were inherently meaningful; he believed that the flow of history was meaningful only because God was back of it, directing it, and expressing himself through it.

Nor did the prophet believe that man's mind and man's values were the things that were to be satisfied by the course of history. He believed that history was, as it were, a mediating thing which brought man into the

presence of God, and that man was satisfied because events brought him to God. Events were satisfactory for man because they were transparent for him, since it was through them and in connection with them that man understood the intention of God. In all this God was decisive; not man, not events, but God related to man through events, and events transparent and mediating between God and man.

God's Grasp of History I should like to suggest that the prophetic idea about things should be in our own thinking; that it is not enough to follow our contemporaries in believing that history is meaningful, but that we ought to do it as the prophets did. A modern way of doing this is to hold that events are significant, not primarily because they in themselves are transparent, but because they are "grasped" from above, from outside of themselves, from time to time, by the almighty and everlasting God.

The notion that I would offer for your consideration can be expressed in the New Testament sentence that the kingdom of God has drawn nigh. The kingdom of God has "drawn nigh" to a great moment, and that is what gives it its greatness. The kingdom of God has possessed itself of this turn of events, of this climax in the course of history, and it is therefore that the event has become a revelation point, not because of its intrinsic nature.

In other words, we ought to believe, not in events, but in God--a God who approaches us through the crises and the turning points and the contour of happening as it confronts us. We must hold a faith in God--not as an abstract God lost in his own timelessness, like Aristotle's God, contemplating only the blessedness of his own life and not even knowing that there is a world--no! Events should bring us into the presence of a God who is himself interested in events and who approaches us chiefly through the course of human affairs.

To say that the meaningfulness of our life comes from the fact that it is "grasped" from above and beyond, and that this meaningfulness must therefore be believed and not simply seen, must be acknowledged by the eyes of faith and not by the eyes of our reason--to say this is not to say that events are therefore meaningless. Oh, no! How could God grasp events, and therefore appear to us through the events that he grasps, if events were intrinsically meaningless?

Events themselves vary. There are constructive times and there are critical times, as the sociologists say. There are times when things are quiet and creative; there are times when things are shaken and disintegrate; there are times which are more luminous than other times; there are times which any eye can see are more fruitful than other times. It is precisely to these events in their differences and their variety (a variety which reason itself understands and perceives) that the hand of God reaches out. By touching them and making them his own, God gives us a meaningful history, so we never find God apart from history, nor history apart from God.

Yet we do not make the mistake of thinking that history is self-explanatory and ever and always luminous to our reason. That simply is not true; no event, on the view that we are urging here, is so luminous that it fulfills us in and of itself. It is fulfilling only because it has been made his own by a holy and omnipotent God.

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On the other hand, no event is so destructive, disintegrative, and terrible that it can deny us our fulfillment; because neither fulfillment nor denial comes from events--but, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed [the body] hath power to cast [the soul] into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him"--fear not what men can do. We must not fear what we can do to ourselves; even though we can make a bomb so big that we could destroy the whole human enterprise, as an event, this would have nothing to do with our fulfillment or our failure to arrive at our heart's desire. For the thing that fulfills, and the thing that denies fulfillment in judgment and condemnation, is in both cases God.

Our Critical Attitude Toward Life

The Quest of Modern Man Another prophetic interest is that of criticism, of judgment. (Incidentally, these words mean the same thing etymologically.) Modern man is like the prophets in this respect also: that he is highly critical of the human scene. Modern man is hard to please. This is not to deny the many and obvious optimistic aspects of modern thought; but we are not interested in them at the moment--they are relevant elsewhere. It remains true that modern man is very sharply critical of certain aspects of human living.

For example, modern man is more "programmatic" about human society than any of his ancestors. He looks at the present, and he plans as it were a sort of housing development for life. He wants to tear down the whole present method of housing life and to replace it with a great project of his own. It is true that there is a great deal of difference--and a great deal of heat--between those who apparently are for the planned society and those who are for the unplanned society, so to speak. And yet the differences are not very thoroughgoing. For, everywhere you find him, modern man has deep designs upon human life; he wants to break it into bits and remold it closer to the heart's desire. We differ only in tactics; and I think our warmth as we attack each other about this problem has something to do with our uneasy feeling that we are all radicals here, and that some of us are a little bit bolder than others!

Modern man is a critic of life; he judges human things, in the name of humanitarian idealism, let us say. Modern man, everywhere you find him, believes in individual self-realization; on the physical level, so that we shall be well housed, well fed, well clothed; on the mental level, above the physical; and on the artistic, cultural, rational level as well. We are deeply interested in the relations between man and nature, which we might call "economics". We are sharply critical of the relations between man and man, which we denominate "politics". In all directions the roving, restless mind of modern man looks with a critical, questioning eye at what he sees, and he dreams deep, long dreams about what he would like to see there. And this is true of us all, whether we bear one party label or another, one denomination or another.

Modern man is so critical of what he finds that he is ready at the drop of a hat to sacrifice the present to the future. Take evolutionary thought, which is sharply critical thought: we will sacrifice a whole present to some dreamed-of future; we will sacrifice this generation to posterity. We are used to that now, lo this long time. And not only will we

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sacrifice the present, but we will sacrifice any number of future generations to some problematic, glittering, last, fulfilling generation, and we will say, "Why, the game is worth the candle! That my remote greatgrandchildren may live in plenty, or in peace, is worth any sacrifice."

That I would liquidate any present for the sake of a bright future that I can discern, is critical thought. Modern man is so critical that this unease about the present, this preoccupation with a better day, has given rise to what was once dubbed "the cult of the questers". Modern man is a quester. This is expressed perhaps as well as it ever has been by John Masefield in "The Seekers":

"Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth nor blessed abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road."

Modern man is always on the move, never settling down, always pressing on.

So deeply has this element penetrated into the heart of modern man that we have been in danger of spoiling our capacity of enjoyment. We never settle down to enjoy anything, because instantly we can think of some better possibility in the name of which we destroy this one, and then we move on again. It's all right to move on, and maybe we should; but, as all sacramental thinking understands, we ought not to be in such a hurry, friends. We ought to settle down and enjoy ourselves once in a while; we ought to jump over the fence and idle in the field--or else, what's the use of it all?

Man as Judge Modern man is very critical; don't let his optimism mislead you on this point. No man has ever laid the measure of criticism on every aspect of life, social and individual, the way modern man has. This is like the prophets. But what was the criterion of all this judgment, this criticism? The criterion was always man himself. It is true that, for the sake of pious phrases, for the sake of not making anybody mad, we were willing to say "God"--if you meant by God the sum of all human aspirations. If you meant a kind of vague name which collected together and put perfumed rosewater on human values, but didn't interfere with the serious business involved, then you could use the word "God". But the criterion was really man himself; "the stars in their courses," we said, "are on the side of these values."

In making man himself the judge and criterion of things (though we used the word "God", it was always a God who thought like a man and who came out at the same place man did), we necessarily implied that man was a fit judge; he was capable of judging, and therefore, whatever aspects about him were to be criticized, he himself was sound at the heart. But if man is judge, and therefore sound at the heart, you get some very embarrassing problems. One problem is that failure is always in some sense accidental, in some sense external, and therefore, in the final analysis, incomprehensible and meaningless.

Another result you get if you make man sound at the heart (which you have to do in order to make him the final judge of what is right and what is wrong in life) is that failure finally frustrates man, because you have split man in two. You have split him into an aspect where he is sound and an aspect where he fails and therefore is not sound, and you can never get these two aspects together again.

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In other words, where you find failures in life which were ultra vires (which man cannot straighten up), all you've done is to put a sword of division between the sound part of man--the part which discerns failures --and the failure itself, which must be external to the sound part because it is a failure, and about which you can do nothing. That is one kind of problem you get when you make man himself the criterion of the whole process of life.

Another deep difficulty into which you land if you make man himself --or the stars in their courses, or a God who is just a super-man--the judge of all life, is that ultimately you are judging one form of life by another form. For example, if you are against Protestantism, this must mean that you are for Catholicism, or Buddhism, or some alternative form, either religious or irreligious. Where else could you get a basis upon which to stand to bring your critical judgment to bear against Protestantism?

Or, since man is the sole basis of all judgments, how can you be against Russia except in the name of an alternative--the United States of America, or the free world, or the North Atlantic Pact, or something like that? (Unless you want to go out of this world altogether and have Martian man, or the monks at Mount Athos, or something else that is obviously out of the stream of history--and even they are still men!) Since man is the criterion, your platform has to be man at some point. You cannot judge except by some other man, if man alone is the ultimate judge of what is good, and what is to stay, and what is to be changed, and what is to be left.

Or, if you are against the United States at any point (as so much of the world is today), you must be pro-Russian. How else could you launch a criticism against the United States except from the standpoint of sympathy with Russia or with some other way of living?

"Thus Saith the Lord" The only way out of this kind of problem, where judging one man means that you are putting another man up as your criterion, is to find a criterion which is above both of them --that is to say, a criterion which is not confined to the special limits and interests of any form. This is exactly what the prophets did. So the prophet could speak a word against Israel and not be on behalf of Assyria; the prophet could speak a word against Assyria and not be on behalf of Israel. In both cases he could be speaking the word of almighty God: "Thus saith the Lord"--against Assyria, against Israel, against Chaldea, against all the neighbors of Judah.

This kind of criticism gives you the possibility of making relevant judgments about any historical force without being a partisan of some other force in so doing. This means that you can help all people, insofar as criticism helps them. This means that you can be relevant to history and yet in some sense rise above the shortcomings of history. Another virtue in this kind of criticism which can be relevant and yet rise above the limits of history is that the criticism of history which comes from God is given and done in hope: "I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live." But the criticism in which we indulge among ourselves, and which is based upon ourselves, is not given in hope; it is a destructive criticism which can envisage only the obliteration of that force which we have judged and found wanting.

[illegible]

Our Perception of Man's Radical Wrongness

There is a third place in which we find a point of contact between modern thought and the mind of the prophets, and that is in the notion of radical wrongness, or sin. Here I shall take an illustration drawn from classical Marxist thinking (unless by this time Marxist thinking, through the madness of Marxists and the hysteria of the opponents of Marxism, is no longer a living possibility--but I hope we haven't reached that stage.)

Marxist Ideology One of the very interesting notions in classical Marxism is that of ideology. "Ideology" was an invented word in Marxism. I notice that the reports of this MRA convention which is being held currently here in Washington refer almost every day to some "ideological problem"--and always wrongly, because the word is always used as if it meant simply "theory", and as if an "ideological difference" meant a difference in people's theories. The word does not mean that. "Ideology" means the kind of thinking that purports to be universal, but is really inspired by some special interest which veils itself behind this facade of universality. In other words, there is something very dark and reprehensible about ideology, whereas the word "theory" does not have this coloration.

Hegel's Analysis of History.-- Marxism, as you know, took its rise by way of opposition from the thinking of the German philosopher, Hegel. Hegel said that the stream of human history was a continued story in which one thing was always happening. This one thing that was happening behind the whole pageant of history was the self-realization of one great cosmic figure, the Universal Spirit. No matter whether the history was that of China, of India, of the Greeks or the Romans, or of the German West of modern times, it was always the Universal Spirit realizing himself in this lengthened tale.

So Hegel said that the real heart of things was a spiritual process, whereas the outer appearance of things was the solid stuff of history. What Hegel did was to "mentalize" events, to put an X-ray on them; and he was interested in what he saw, not with the naked eye, but through his X-ray--namely, the secret story of the Universal Spirit.

Thus, in effect, the real business of history was the thing you could not see, but could only discern through following Hegel's analysis; whereas outer events--the struggles of men, the clash of convictions, the sacrifice of heroes, the failure of the brave, cowardice, honor, dishonesty, chicanery--all the things that mark the brilliant and glorious story of man in history were but appearance. (One of the books that was used rather widely in the study of philosophy when I was in college came out of this amazing idea. It was a book by an English scholar named Bradley, entitled Appearance and Reality; and its thesis was that that which you saw was only appearance. Reality was that to which only Hegel could give you the key; and then you could discern it, not by faith, but by Hegelian logic.)

Marx's Analysis of History.--- Marx simply turned Hegel's theory upside down. He said that the basic thing was not the self-realization of the Universal Spirit, accompanied on the surface of history by the flow of event, but that it was exactly the other way round: the material order was basic. That is, the things that counted were the economic arrangements of

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production and distribution of goods, and the social instruments of society. This is Marxist materialism, not in the metaphysical sense, but in the sense of the practical, "hard-headed businessman" of American mythology; and this was supposed to be basic.

Then, above this real, material order of event, which was decisive, there flowed a parallel series--the mental series. The material was basic; the mental and spiritual was superficial, and was like the will-o'-the-wisps and the nauseous gases that rise up from a marsh. Always, said Marx, the thing that is at work is a society interested in bread alone--that is what is real. Then this society throws up a lot of ideas; but that is what the psychologists call "rationalization"--good reasons to mask bad interests.

Ideology, in Marx's thought, is the intellectual offshoot and parallel of what he considered the second stage in history. The first stage in history was primitive communism, the second stage was capitalism, and the third stage would be a sophisticated and post-capitalistic communism. We now, in all the world (according to this analysis), are at the second stage; and up out of the morass of capitalism comes this nauseous gas, which is all the thinking, the theory, the teaching, the art, the music, the philosophy, the maxims in the copybook of the capitalist order. All this is ideology, and it's rotten to the core. It purports to be loyal to the search for the light of truth, and to acknowledge only universal criteria; but if you look deeply enough into it, you can see it's a facade to divert attention and to conceal the real situation. It's all bad--it's ideology, says Marx.

(That's why, when the reports from the MRA convention talk about this ideology and that ideology, they don't really know what they are talking about--they are misusing a very important word. Thurman Arnold some years ago wrote a book, which is probably still available, called The Folklore of Capitalism. It is a study of the kind of things that happen in this realm where the capitalist order is basic--it is a study in ideology. Karl Mannheim wrote a great book called Ideology and Utopia, which is to this day one of the really shrewd and profound analyses of the modern spirit.)

This, according to Marx, is the story of ideas, which he called "ideology"--and it's a great notion! This is one of the few places in modern thought where you come close to what the prophets meant by sin--namely, a radical wrongness in man which an individual is not free to take on or put off as he likes. It is at this point that a great segment of modern thought understands how people, as individuals and as collectives, can really be lost beyond their power to save themselves. According to this analysis, ideology, which comes up out of the very structure of your life, is too much for the individual and even for the group--you can't think straight even if you would!

Another place where you could work out this analysis and come to an exactly similar conclusion is in psychology, where it is understood how in certain mental situations you get complexes and fixed ideas about which you can do nothing, at least in the direct and immediate sense. Only indirectly and by a very long-continued process, if ever, can you disabuse yourself of these ways of thinking and acting.

"The Evil Imagination
of the Heart"

This comes very close to the radical wrongness the prophets had in mind when they talked about sin.

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The prophets had this kind of an analysis of the human predicament. They discerned in man an evil bent; they even had a name for it, which occurs throughout the Old Testament--yetzer hara, which we translate as "the evil imagination of the heart". The evil imagination of the heart is not an empirical thing; it is a deep structural flaw in human thinking and acting. As Jeremiah expressed it, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."

This is what St. Paul called "sin" in the singular, as against "transgressions", in the plural. Transgressions were the empirical wrongdoings reflecting a deep dislocation, which was in his terminology "sin". Another word which he used for this radical evilness about man was the word "flesh", which referred not to the body, but to a radical wrongness about human proceedings.

The prophets said that this radical wrongness was finally a radically wrong relation with God. The great penitential Psalm which we say on Ash Wednesday and on other penitential occasions expresses this: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight ..." The wrongness which the prophets discerned is a wrongness between man and that which is the ultimate context of his life, namely, God; it is not a wrongness completely explainable in terms of man, as modern thought pretends.

God Is the Judge When we apply this generous and far-flung conception of radical wrongness to modern notions of it, we find shortcomings in them and, I think, ways to overcome those shortcomings. Let us go back to the problem of ideology for a moment, approaching it from the standpoint of the prophetic notion of sin.

Take the ideological taint which the Marxist mind fastens on somebody. If this man thinks this way because he is at a certain stage, then why criticize him? If this is a stage, why call it bad? Why not just call it a stage? Why not say simply that it's there? This man is merely acting out of instinct, the way an animal does; he is determined to act that way by empirical factors alone; therefore criticism is irrelevant. And yet Marxist criticism is marked by as much righteous fury as any other!

Furthermore--still thinking about ideology against the background of the prophetic notion of sin--if this thing in man is inevitable, if it comes simply from a stage, then there is no hope. All you can do is to liquidate. (Liquidate--where have I heard that word before?) While you may win over an occasional nobleman or member of the bourgeoisie, there is no hope for the aristocrats or the bourgeoisie as groups. There is no hope of winning over the Kulaks from their belief in individual landholding.

In Marxist thought ideology is connected with the capitalist stage of development. When that stage passes, ideology may be expected to disappear. The proletariat will not be characterized by ideology. What this means is that one group--the proletariat--is used as the norm of judgment for all groups. But this is the very thing the true prophet refuses to do. It is God, who is beyond all particular interests, who is the criterion of prophetic judgment. It is at this point that the Marxist secularization of prophecy becomes apparent. Since the proletariat is the norm, no criticism can be leveled against the norm. In a new and special sense the Marxist might say, "... shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

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WASHINGTON, D. C.
JANUARY 1, 1900

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But the Judge of all the earth is not a man, and that true Judge has rendered a verdict of universal sinfulness: "... the scripture hath concluded all under sin ..." "... there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "... by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified ..."

Our Hope in the Future

The Historical Background There is another element of prophetic thought to be found in the outlook of modern man: hope in history. This hopefulness is due beyond doubt to our prophetic heritage. Modern thought stems from the Hebrew and the Greek traditions, by way of the medieval development. If we examine the Greek tradition, we find no element of historic hopefulness in it whatsoever. As far as time and this world were concerned, the Greek verdict was a tragic one. Human history was tragic because life was made up of two incompatible elements, one coming from the ideal realm above, and one coming from the material realm below. These were imperfectly brought together; the material element was in utter opposition to the ideal element; therefore ultimate dualism engulfed the meaning of life and hope of the future.

The best that the Greeks could ever do, as they looked down the roadway toward the future, was to see an endless, cyclic repetition of beginnings and conclusions. Therefore they were not interested in a look down the hall of the future, but in a vertical escape out of the human situation by means of speculation and mysticism.

There was no hope for the future in medieval thought; hope for the future was displaced by the vertical expectation of the individual's death and of his appointment with the Purgatorial cleansing, and finally with the Beatific Vision in Paradise.

The prophets, while their diagnosis of the human situation was radical and disquieting, nevertheless held out hope to men. Thanks to what God was going to do, a new and open situation would appear. God was going to set forth a New Covenant; he would bring about a period when his law would be written on the heart. No more would it humiliate and discourage men by confronting their unwilling hearts from outside. Only a miracle would suffice, but it could be counted upon.

Modern man is like the prophets in that he likes the future; he is interested in the future; the future is a great thing! Just as the prophet was always saying "in that day", that glorious day, so modern man relishes and feasts upon happy prospects of better days. He spends his energies gladly in working for the future because he thinks it can be different from the present, and different in a happier way.

The Illusion of Temporal Fulfillment But there are marked differences between modern hopefulness and prophetic hopefulness. With modern man, the better future toward which he strains is, as it were, in the egg; it is already there in some sense, in the evolutionary process or in the "inevitable progress" which is the "first law". This means that man has a misplaced confidence, because sometimes things don't get better, but rather worse. They got worse for the Assyrians, they got

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worse for the Babylonians, for the ancient Egyptians, for the Romans; they got worse for the Mayas of Central America, for the Incas of Peru, for the Toltecs and the Aztecs of Mexico. Things got worse, and these people disappeared; and only the archeologists ever heard of them again. Sometimes things get worse; and it is a misplaced confidence to assume that the future itself is guaranteed.

Furthermore, as modern man contemplates the future, he contemplates events--not necessarily just sacks of money in the bank or bonds in the safety deposit box (although we will not make light of either of those, especially in a time of rising prices!); but modern man thinks of more parks, and bigger auditoriums, and higher university attendance statistics, and more art exhibits. We always think in terms of particulars when we think of our better future, and this means that we are open to disillusionment, because no particular in the past has ever satisfied our heart.

Isn't it an illusion to think that some day there will be a park so big and green, or a picture so luminous and persuasive, or an amount of money in the bank so big, or some other satisfaction so tremendous that the human heart, coming to this place, will say, "Well, this is the end of the road"? How ridiculous to think that that will ever be true--a television screen so big! The very week I bought mine they announced one five inches bigger, and I was lost!

We modern men believe that we will be totally fulfilled in the temporal order. That is, we are impelled to believe that some Utopian outcome is a real possibility--that Utopia can be brought off. Of course, every time anybody has claimed to have done so, the rest of us have all criticized him. One reason we are having such a tough time with the Russians is because they really believe in Utopianism, and they think they have it; and everybody they can delude into following them in this conviction thinks the same thing--and then we have them on our hands too!

This Utopianism of the Communists is not just Realpolitik and all the old things, but something new and ghostly, and very powerful; and we are not going to be able to contend successfully with it by some little clichés about "political benefits". We are dealing with powers and principalities, and not with flesh and blood; we are dealing with wickedness in the high places, with rulers of this world's darkness, and with demonic things, just as we were with the Nazis. We are dealing with something tremendous.

The Arm of the Lord The prophet believed in the future because he had confidence in God. He trusted God; and he not only dared to contemplate the future, he actually loved it, because it was God's future. So, when he looked forward into the future, the prophet would say, "He hath made bare his holy arm"--look at those biceps! "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform it," he said--think of that glorious zeal! "In that day, saith the Lord," I will do so and so; and the prophet was happy. He dared release his hopes into the course of event. The prophet looked forward to the future because he believed that "in that day" God would be well pleased with him, and he would know God, and "not as a stranger".

The prophet was no monk; and it is true that God, along with this good pleasure (since God was no monk, either), would give him big grapes

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and bigger melons, and unimaginable fertility in the ground. God would take the curse from nature, and the animals would no more be subjected to vanity nor violent--the lamb would lie down with the lion, and the ox with the bear. The Messianic feast would begin, and never end; and they would come from the East and the West and sit down to God's great supper. The prophet was no anchorite, or a discarnate spirit--every part of him would rejoice in the fulfillment, including his stomach and his eyes; but it was because God was host and was there, and they would finally come together. The dinner God spreads is more than just a dinner; it is a family reunion.

"A Time After Time" The future, yes; but by all means let it be a future which is not too little for us, as every present and every past has always been, where some tangible satisfaction is concerned. Total fulfillment in time is what lies back of our Utopian illusion; and if the notion that man can be totally fulfilled in this world is what lies back of it, then, while we do not have this virus at the moment--at least in a virulent form--we are still subject to it. We haven't got it, but we might get it--"there but for the grace of God go I."

If I, as a Western man, believe that time can fulfill me, then I can have no radical criticism of the Communist Utopia. I can always say that I don't like the Communist version of it, and I'll provide the version--but in that case I am as dangerous to mankind as the Communist is, for I have succumbed to the disease to which we are all open. We have no immunity to this Utopian disease as long as we believe that man can be fulfilled completely in human history. We can have no convincing reason to show why the Communists haven't got Utopia, if we believe that Utopia itself is possible. We can have a convincing reason only if we radically criticize the whole idea of Utopianism--and that we do. We believe that total fulfillment in the future is guaranteed, but that we will get our fulfillment, as far as time is concerned, only to the extent that it is inherently possible in time.

I don't know what the best adjustment of the struggle between German and Frank over the Rhine and Alsace is; I don't know what the inherently best solution to the struggle between Slav and German is; I don't know what the inherently best solution to the struggle between the dark man and the white is. There is some best possible solution; but even this best possible solution is still short of perfection and of Utopia. So, while we can promise the best possible fulfillment in the future under the Christian aegis, nevertheless we do not delude ourselves that Utopia itself is possible in time.

To be sure, we must have a modified Utopianism; we have to believe that things can be better, or else we would never take a step--we wouldn't know what step to take, nor be inspired to take it. So, in order to maintain our hopes, and in order to direct our action, we have to allow ourselves some Utopian thought--especially in Christianity, where we have been empowered by the Holy Spirit. But the time which will finally fulfill us is not within history, but is a "time after time"; it is beyond history that we look for our final participation in the feast of the Messiah.

The Divine Causality

There is a fifth point of contact between modern thought and the mind of the prophets. Both find it congenial to interpret events from a dynamic point of view, as fields of power and systems of accomplishment.

God's Immanent Activity	The prophets considered that God was a personal agent whose power accounted for all things. Everything that existed did so because God is and because he would have it that way. Without his activity there would be only chaos and void. He upheld the being of all nature and guided the course of history. Nothing could oppose him, and to the extent that anything did so, he suffered it to. Consequently, when the prophets were confronted with any event or trend of events, they did not ask, "Is God in this?" but "How is he in it?" As they looked forward into the future their sole concern was, how will he form it?
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Modern man is very much interested in the dynamic aspect of things, and is at home with it. The Greeks typically were interested in the rational side of things. They understood eternal truth, and even to some extent how this was reflected in the shifting, mutable course of earthly events. But they were not interested in power, the element that translates good ideas into realities. They were embarrassed before it and dealt with it haltingly.

Modern man follows his power-conscious Hebrew ancestors rather than his over-rational Greek forebears. Classical physics is the science of motion, a system of motions accounted for by concrete powers sufficient to overcome inertial resistance. The science of electricity is in a sense the pure study of power in itself. In psychology the will is prominent; indeed, conation is the deepest aspect of the psyche. In history the element of decision, of power, and therefore the unfolding character of history, is well understood. It was the idealist Schelling who said that "arbitrariness is the mother of history." It is appropriate that Pragmatism and Existential thought should appear in our day. It was inevitable that a modern philosopher, Schopenhauer, should describe the world as compounded of will and idea (Die Welt als Wille und Idee).

Modern man understands that events are pushed along by a combination --by, if you will, a triangle--of forces. At the top of the triangle is cultural history (the kind of thing Hegel described); one point of the triangle is political history (the kind of thing we got in our school books when we were youngsters); and the other point is economic pressures and dynamics (about which we've heard more in these latter days). Modern man understands how some great force, which he might even be willing to call "God", operates to bring things about; and at the same time he can explain things by referring to the purposes of the men who accomplish them. This is the immanent production of history by resident forces and by meanings that are at hand.

God's Transcendent Activity	Though the prophets thought dynamically and accounted for history as the personal activity of God, they did so in a manner different from that of modern man. They understood that this activity was both immanent and transcendent in character. An illustration will make this clear.
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In Isaiah, chapter 45, we find Cyrus restoring civilized living in Palestine and rebuilding the Temple. This he did for reasons of his own--perhaps to make a buffer-state between his kingdom and Egypt. The prophet understands that God makes this course of conduct his own, and in a profound sense accounts for it. This is God's immanent activity, working within, through the ordinary processes and powers of man. But the full account is not in hand until we notice something else. God says to Cyrus, "I have sur-named thee ['anointed'], though thou hast not known me... I girded thee, though thou hast not known me ..." In a sense, the activity of God is completely above that of man, apart from it, and counter to it. This is God's transcendent activity.

Modern man understands one side of this, and one side only: the immanent side of the divine working. That is, he understands that the course of human history is controlled by purpose, by meaning; that it is a series of events wrought in the interests of an increasing purpose; and that meaning is something which does not live in an isolated manner in the heavens, but is expressed in action in the stream of history. What modern man does not understand, however, is the transcendent divine activity which parallels, and is never to be confused with, the immanent activity of God.

Because modern man fails to understand this, there are certain aspects of history which are completely opaque to him and which he cannot at all explain to himself. For example, modern man cannot understand how a situation where there is absolute divergence between two great historical forces--as in the present situation--can yet be luminous and meaningful. Modern man can understand only an either/or: one man is right only because the other man is wrong; and since one man is right, the other must be wrong. He cannot understand a situation where some transcendent purpose could be served, and therefore the situation luminous even though they clash utterly.

The Lord of All Modern man cannot understand breakdown, confusion, trouble --he can only understand construction, progress, betterment, structure, growth, happiness. He has no real place for these other things; and yet, if there is a dynamic behind human history which is above and out of the flow of events, then one could understand how even darkness and trouble might be judgment and hope, might be the chastening of those whom the Lord loves.

Perhaps we are called to go through this dark valley in order that we may learn some truths that could only be taught us through this. But if you live completely in events themselves, you cannot appeal beyond them to a purpose which expresses itself even in events with no immediate, intrinsic, inherent meaningfulness.

Finally, unless you invoke this transcendent causality to parallel the immanent causality of things, then you misunderstand the nature of the Providence which is in history on any showing. Take for example the teaching of Leibnitz about "pre-established harmony"--a harmony which was over all the isolated elements of life and which wrought them into a wondrous totality. This harmony was a rational harmony which Leibnitz' mind conceived and which he could teach to other minds who would follow him. Then, following Leibnitz, Adam Smith applied this "pre-established harmony" to the social order. He said that if every monad--every individual entrepreneur--

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went off solely seeking his own self-interest in the most violent way, this would flourish into the most beautiful unity, in which the good of all would be served.

But this is a rational account of Providence which the facts cannot sustain. By looking only to events themselves, we cannot understand how we can be completely fulfilled; because while there are some events which fulfill us in an obvious manner and which enrich life, there are other events, such as the death of empires, the breakdown of human relationships, the loss of health, and so on, which do not obviously complete us in themselves.

It is only by appealing beyond all events to an unwavering causality which is the same whatever the weather below--whether clear or foul--that we can see how "all things work together for good to them that love God ...". Whether good event or bad event, whether growth or death, whether peace or war, whether accord or contradiction--all things serve his purposes whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our thoughts, and yet who never works apart from the ways and the thoughts of men.

14 January 1951

A PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION OF THE PRESENT HOUR

Introduction

Tonight we conclude this course of lectures on prophetic thought, including the valued lectures of Dr. Kevin and Professor Tillich. These lectures began with a description of the appearance of the prophetic type of thought in Israel and its modifications in Christianity. Next, they dealt with the reappearance, in the Reformation, of prophetic criticism after its relative disappearance from medieval Christianity. Thirdly, these lectures included modern forms of prophetic thought, such as "The Kingdom of God and the Social Gospel" in America, as well as Marxism, which is to be described as a secularized version of prophetic thought.

In our last lecture I gave you a number of points of contact between modern thought and prophetic thought: the meaningfulness of the course of history; the willingness to judge men and events in the light of a criterion; the acknowledgment of radical wrongness in human life; the hope of better possibility in the future; and the transcendent causality of the divine. All these elements are derived from the prophetic tradition. We cannot understand ourselves apart from this prophetic heritage, and the prophetic heritage lives on in our modern mentality.

Yet in every case we saw a divergence. This divergence--this newness which is apparent in our thought, as contrasted with that of the historic prophets--is not without its value. We, too, have our song to sing; and yet we ought not abandon the prophetic viewpoint without facing to the full the consequences of that abandonment at every point.

Tonight, as a kind of proof of the pudding, we propose to apply the prophetic point of view, as we hold it, to the present situation. The title of this lecture is therefore "A Prophetic Interpretation of the Present Hour"; but before we begin to interpret this hour, we should have a glance at the course of events which we propose to interpret.

Two Crises in American History

The Civil War We can perhaps best approach the present situation by way of an historical analogy. I am thinking of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Certainly, for that great and tragic leader, at any rate (although I cannot say as much for many others in the government and among the rank and file), that conflict--that majestic course of events--was a very clear and meaningful enterprise.

The one purpose which Lincoln had throughout, from the beginning to the end, was that the Union must be preserved. This was his sole purpose. As late as August 22, 1862, he wrote to Horace Greeley:

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery.

"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and

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if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that."

He would do whatever was required to preserve the Union.

On September 13 of that same year, Lincoln met a deputation from Chicago--the Chicago Committee of United Religious Denominations--which tried to tell him what the will of God was, by saying:

"The subject presented in the memorial is one upon which I have thought much for weeks past, and I may even say for months. I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice, and that by religious men who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will. I am sure that either the one or the other class is mistaken in that belief, and perhaps in some respects both. I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed that He would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it."

Yet, in that same month of September, some time between the 13th and the 22nd of the month, Lincoln came to a decision about the freeing of slaves as a separate matter, for on the 22nd of September, 1862, we have the first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. On January 1, 1863, we have the final draft of that document, which thereupon made it part of the official purpose of the war that the slaves should go free. From then on, Abraham Lincoln considered that the war had two purposes, and to these two purposes he adhered with a tenacity which has since become part of history.

What Lincoln intended in the period after the war, what plans he would have made, we shall never know, because of what happened to him. In consequence of that act of violence, the period after the war (which we now know as the period of reconstruction) was a period of confusion, of contradictory policies, of vengefulness, which has left its mark on history to this moment.

This period, when the country had lost its way, was characterized by an irredentism in American life as marked as any similar phenomenon to be found anywhere in Europe. Another characteristic of this terrible period following the Civil War, when there was no longer any great, clear leadership, was the so-called Solid South. That was an instrumentality which had to be invented, for it was the only negative strategy possible in the face of an unwritten and unadmitted alliance between the industrial North and the agrarian West which has marked American politics most of the time from the end of the Civil War to this day.

It is rather strange, and one of those poetic justices of history, that in this present hour of our country's life the Solid South, after playing a purely negative, defensive role for decades, has suddenly come into the position of the group which holds the balance of power. It could be argued that history is being constructed more by this group in our legislative life than by any other group today. Is it not terrible, is it not a punishment--although a just punishment--on our country that a group so

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the problem and the objectives of the research. The second part is a literature review, which summarizes the work of other researchers in the field. The third part is a description of the methodology used in the study. The fourth part is a presentation of the results of the study. The fifth part is a discussion of the results and their implications. The sixth part is a conclusion, which summarizes the main findings of the study.

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decisive in our affairs is really an historical anachronism whose thoughts are in the past and not in the present, a group which is not contemporary in the proper sense at all? The mills of God grind slow, but exceeding fine.

The Last War This is the analogy that occurs to me when I try to find my way through the present situation. Roosevelt, like Lincoln, was a man who saw things very clearly. We know perhaps more about Roosevelt--we know he had a very empirical type of outlook, and did not anticipate the meaning of events as much as he followed after them. But at any rate, whether he got the meaning contemporaneously with an event or only afterward, he got it clearly. And he was always ahead of the people when he did get it, because their lag was much greater than his own. During the last war he was clear about its meaning; he was clear about his strategy in connection with it. He fought the war in a more or less luminous way--much more than can be said for the population at large.

What he understood by the postwar period, and what he proposed to do about that period, we shall never know; because, while he was alive, he steadily refused to look very far ahead. He would always answer questions about the somewhat distant future by saying, "Well, that's an 'iffy' kind of thing"--that was his stock answer. He liked to grope his way along; and unfortunately for us all, death overtook him before he had groped his way into the real meaning of the events and situations of our time.

Two Opposing World Powers

I have tried to reduce the problem of our period to its basic elements--the elements which are structural and which confront anyone who thinks about them or who would do anything about them.

The first of the basic problems that mark our period is that the world is divided between two great powers, as against a world which might have been divided among many great powers. Before the 1914 World War, there was a whole fistful of great powers: the British Empire, the German Empire, Russia, a powerful France, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (which at least looked powerful), an Italy which had some strength, the United States, and Japan.

But after the last war (which I cannot compel my tongue to call World War II, because that seems too trivial a way to describe a great, tragic moment in human affairs), Britain was greatly weakened, France disappeared almost altogether as a major power, Germany was broken, Japan was broken, and two powers were left confronting each other starkly over a great chasm, with the world lying temptingly around them under the best circumstances. (This is sheerly descriptive of the situation that we confronted after the war.)

The result is that the world depends in a manner unprecedented upon the wisdom and the good will of these great powers. There is very little world public opinion to bring to bear against them, such as there was when there was a more equal distribution of the world's power. To put the situation in political terms, our lack today is that of a world middle class to unite these starkly opposed colossi. Their power--their objective situation--tempts them to pride and to impatience with any control from beyond.

To Bridge the Gap A second sheerly descriptive thing must be recognized: these two great powers differ in quality. One of them is in one age and the other is in another age. It is true, however, that there are many moderating factors which tend to bridge the qualitative gap between these powers. Let us think first of the moderating factors in Russia.

Moderating Factors in Russia.--- Those of you whose memories go back some years will recall that there was a great debate between Trotsky and Stalin, the subject of which was world revolution versus revolution in one State. Stalin, the victor, stood for revolution in one State and postponement, either temporary or long deferred, of world revolution. That was Stalin's slant on things, and was the mark of that man as against the much more doctrinaire Trotsky.

Not only did the leader of Russia have this theoretical conviction, but we must also think of him and the other members of the hierarchy as being corrupted by an almost absolute power, unchallenged for many years now. These men have been tempted by their position, and they have yielded to cynicism about human affairs in general and about Communist matters in particular. For a long time I have felt that the leaders of Russia pay lip-service to the tenets of revolution and of Communism much more than they offer real heart's devotion to them. A good deal of what they say is to keep in line the faithful, both in Russia and in countries beyond Russia. They are using the naive loyalty of these people on behalf of Russian foreign policy.

Furthermore, sometimes they have used their advertised loyalty to the revolution in order to frighten their capitalistic opponents into foolish action. One of the best ways to take advantage of an enemy is to scare him; and if your enemy has a bugaboo that he really fears, so that if you yell that the Black Douglas will get him if he doesn't watch out, he is apt to do something very idiotic. I'm sure that a good deal of what we have heard has been for the record, and to scare us into doing things we would not do in our wiser moments.

Moderating Factors in America.--- So much for the moderating factors on the Russian side. Now on our own side, this is a country which began in a great revolution, and which in some sense has lived in its revolution throughout its history. That is, our country inaugurated a new period--a period of revolutions, of which the French Revolution is perhaps the second most illustrious example. A new period altogether was marked by our revolution and the others to which it gave rise.

We have maintained the revolution in this country, in various ways, through symbols and ideas beloved of us all. For instance, there is the idea of "the melting pot"--the idea that in this country a stream of truly pentecostal variety has flowed and has been assimilated, so that those who came from many tongues were incorporated into one new people. This was a new thing. I remember years ago hearing a German exile say that all the countries of the world to which Germans went became German colonies; but, he said, "in this country we are merged instantly." And he added that this made a crisis in the family, because their children would no longer speak German--they had become ashamed of it. "So we have this problem," he said, "that the English I learned in school and the English that my children pick

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. This section also outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of these practices across different departments. It provides a detailed overview of the challenges faced during the process and the strategies employed to overcome them. This section highlights the role of each department in ensuring the successful execution of the plan and the importance of collaboration and communication.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the implementation process. It includes a comprehensive analysis of the data collected, showing the progress made and the areas that still need attention. This section also discusses the impact of the changes on the organization's overall performance and the feedback received from stakeholders.

4. The fourth part of the document concludes with a summary of the key findings and recommendations. It reiterates the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the organization remains on track and adapts to any changes in the environment. The document ends with a call to action, encouraging all employees to take ownership of their roles and contribute to the organization's success.

up on the street are two different kinds of English, and we cannot communicate with each other except by way of German."

We have this sort of continuous revolution in our country. We are a revolutionary people; and all the old aristocratic chancelleries of the world, and all the old royalists and belated medievalists of the world, have been afraid of us from our very beginning. It's not very graceful of us to forget the way we have operated in world affairs since our beginning. It's not very gracious of us to become so "respectable" overnight, and I myself don't like it--I wish to proclaim dissent on the part of one person!

Another thing which has brightened our life and made it attractive to us and to many other people is the so-called "American dream". This is one place where old, inherited molds and patterns did not write the ticket for a man, but where he might start out afresh and be restrained only by his own individual limits; where a man could become anything that he set his heart on becoming; and where he could have almost anything for which he was willing to sacrifice and labor. This is charming, this is attractive, and it's revolutionary, new! And I feel bad to the bottom of my soul when I think of a lot of "Rightists" who are washing this away--and it's going faster today than it ever has gone, in a crisis which is pushing us to the Right in spite of ourselves, against our will.

The Choice of Weapons Nevertheless, even though you have moderating factors such as that on the one hand Russia is not as revolutionary as is sometimes purports to be, and on the other hand we are more revolutionary than we like to be reminded of, yet there is a real, qualitative divergence between these two peoples in this present hour, and it is a very serious problem. I have only this to say for that residual divergence: in matters like this, as in the code of duelling, the choice of weapons always goes to the one who is challenged. Don't forget that. In the end, we, and not the other fellow, decide what it is going to be like.

I think of the British revolution, which is the most perfect instance of this. The British feudal aristocracy, whose position was based upon agrarian industry, was challenged by the revolution of the bourgeoisie--the middle class. The aristocracy resisted, to be sure, but in such a way that when the revolution was accomplished England went on--with a new ruling class, the bourgeoisie, but with the old class still present and accounted for. Almost everywhere else, because of the intransigence of the ruling class when confronted with revolution, it has been found necessary to liquidate them, as with the Bourbons and the nobility in France, and in most of the places in Europe where there has been a bourgeois revolution.

Nowadays England is again confronted with revolution, and again the ruling class is showing a wisdom which seems almost supernatural; for you are getting a new ruling class, labor, but the old parties--the aristocracy, even, let alone the bourgeois businessman--are present and important. They continue to live and, I trust, to eke a certain happiness out of their life, even in this new day. I think that is very instructive for anybody who is confronted with a revolution. They ought to try and examine themselves, as the Prayer Book says, and see how much the violence--or lack of it--of the time depends upon the way they meet this challenge.

17. 10. 1914 11. 10. 1914
 12. 10. 1914 13. 10. 1914

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 1, 1861. It is a formal address, and it is the first of its kind since the signing of the Constitution. The President, James Buchanan, is addressing the Congress, and he is doing so in a very formal and dignified manner. He is discussing the state of the Union, and he is discussing the issues that are facing the country at that time. He is also discussing the role of the President, and he is discussing the responsibilities of the Congress.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, including "Mr. J. H. Smith, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y." and "Mr. J. H. Smith, 123 Main St., New York, N. Y."

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which appears to be a directory or a list of contacts. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are listed below them.

[illegible][illegible]

Nevertheless it takes two to make a fight, and there are two of us involved, and part of the burden of the time is on the other group. Anyone who has had anything to do with Russian diplomacy knows that, except for a brief Indian Summer under Litvinov, the Russians have been almost preternaturally stubborn and disagreeable. To moderate them is easier said than done. Part of their disagreeableness comes from their Marxist convictions; but part of it comes from the unhappy experiences that the Russian revolutionaries had in 1918--and even as recently as the time of the atomic bomb, when Churchill was notified of its imminent use and Stalin was not. I wonder how much we are responsible for the suspicion and the utterly horrid disagreeableness in negotiations that mark the Russians.

The Situation But this was the situation: two powers were dividing the
Confronting world between them in the nature of the case, because most
the President of the other powers had been seriously weakened or destroyed
altogether--two powers which were quite different qualitatively, and whose modus of relationship would have been difficult in any event. Then came the death of Roosevelt, before the problem had been fully posed and before the issues had become clear. He died with the grand strategy unplanned. Our present Chief Executive took office, and a new set of factors entered the picture.

In the first place, the new Executive was unfamiliar with these problems in the way that the man who is responsible for final decisions is familiar with them. For sure, he was Vice President, he had been a Senator, he read the same papers we all do, and he knew what we all knew--and a good deal more. But he had not been Chief Executive at a time when so much was being decided by the Big Three or the Big Four. So we had to allow him a year or so to become familiar with the feel of the new and almost unbearably complicated and difficult situation dropped upon his shoulders. But that was a year more or less lost, while things more or less had their head and began to get out of hand.

Furthermore, in our peculiarly wonderful but sometimes peculiarly inconvenient system, this Executive was circumscribed by a Legislature composed of Republicans who, though they were no longer strong enough to win an election, were strong enough to be there, and by a Solid South (whose position I referred to a moment ago), both characterized by a blind and unarguing "Rightism". The President does not function in a vacuum; he functions responsibly with the legislative resources that are to hand. These were very slim and inauspicious, and I think it is almost a miracle how much the Chief Executive has been able to get out of an old-gray-mare Congress such as we have had since he has been President.

But to some extent President Truman has been a prisoner of the Congress--I think we ought to face that--so much so that for some time now, in my opinion, our foreign policy has really been the Republican foreign policy. One of the saddest things that I have lived to see is the Republicans wanting to shoot the very man--Acheson--who is giving his life's blood to carry out what I think is really their foreign policy: namely, this Rightist, get-tough policy with Russia that makes negotiation almost impossible.

Furthermore, the President has had to contend with an hysteria which was running strongly when he came to power and which has been on the increase

ever since. Here again, let me say, I think he has been a bulwark against this hysteria--in fact, I cannot imagine anyone else defending civil liberties and keeping sanity any better than he has, if as well. Yet it has been too strong for Truman--or for any man. The evidence of this is the fell power of a Senator with an Irish name; the political overthrow of really weighty and important men like Senator Tydings; the defeat of Pepper in Florida by Smathers; the wretched outcome in North Carolina when Frank Graham was rejected; and finally, the fact that (as I read the other day) one of the most popular committees in the new Congress is the House Committee on Un-American Activities--itself perhaps the most un-American thing in all American history from the beginning.

This has been a strong tide with which the President has had to contend; and at times, I'm afraid, it has engulfed him as it has us all. I am strongly for Truman; I was for him when most of the Democratic leaders were not, and when even the ADA had jettisoned him for that most incredible of choices, General Eisenhower. I will sum this aspect of things up by saying that I think Truman has done better than any conceivable and feasible rival or alternate choice of our time. And yet (now I'm free to say what I want to say)--and yet, I wonder if he has really handled this thing. I wonder if anyone short of a genius of the first order could handle the problem which has confronted us.

Our Hour of Darkness At all events, here we are. The war is scarcely over; we have not even secured the consumption goods which we desired after years of rationing and shortage; we have not replenished our savings; and we have not had a grand bust--we haven't been lazy, worldly, idle people, such as our hearts desire to be for a year or so; and now here we are back in it again. We are facing a crisis nobody wants and nobody really understands--and I challenge them to, because it is essentially meaningless. If anybody claims to understand this crisis, I think he is telling something that isn't true, because how can you understand something that is essentially incomprehensible and confused?

We confront a mobilization of ten to twenty years. (At our Seminary we have settled down to the thought that this kind of thing may be with us for the next twenty years. I was talking with an executive of a school--one of about 900 executives who had been called to Washington; he told me that they were making their plans on the basis of at least ten years of this kind of thing.) This mobilization will doubtless be accompanied by what someone has called a "brown-out" of civil liberties, when loyalty oaths will have to be protected by other loyalty oaths, which in turn will have to be battened down with other loyalty oaths; and the secret police will become more powerful than it has been up to now.

The war itself is a war that a good many people think no one can really win. It is a war which, if it becomes intense and long drawn out, will crystallize the intransigence and revolutionary stubbornness of Russia. On the other hand, it will drive us into a reaction to the Right, in the very nature of the case, because we are fighting a revolutionary force. As time goes on, we will doubtless arm Germany and Japan--which will cause the gods of Olympus to laugh, because we have just spent years and blood and treasure to disarm them, for reasons that seemed good, and now we have to put the sword back into their hands. We will do all this in the name of

the Right Republicans and the Right Solid Southerners, as well as of the Vatican, which for world reasons of its own believes it should force us into this kind of conflict.

This is the hour and the power of darkness. At this point, let me put in two parentheses which must be inserted. The first of them is that, given the crisis--whatever its meaning--we all have to support our country. Patriotism is not an option; it is a required course. We all have to say, as Stephen Decatur is supposed to have said, "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong." We are free to evaluate the rightness of what our country does, but we are not free to say yes or no to whether we shall support her. Patriotism may not be a prophetic virtue; but then, prophecy does not exhaust the sum of the virtues!

The second item of this parenthesis is that, given the crisis, the strategy ought to be determined by the actual situation, and by that alone. That is, if Herbert Hoover's "continental defense" is the better strategy, then, for purely objective reasons, that should be followed. If, on the other hand, the enlisting of Europe and the defense of Europe is the better strategy, then we ought to follow that. This has nothing to do with anything except the facts of the case. Given the crisis, what is the best way to handle it? Here we have no interest in considerations about the meaning of the crisis; it is a simple, technical affair: what is to be done this morning?

A Prophetic Analysis

Is There a Meaning? Now we are ready for a prophetic interpretation of our present situation (at least, of one version of that situation). The first thing that occurs to us in making a prophetic interpretation of the present situation is that it is almost meaningless.

The last war had at least a negative meaning, even though it was not going to accomplish anything positively. (I cannot believe that we ever accomplish positive things by wars, but we may prevent terrible negative things from taking place.) In the last war we were confronted with the problem of destroying a threat which was inherently, not accidentally, evil--a revolution of nihilism which was a real rival to the Christian West, and which had little or nothing to do with the Europe and Christendom which preceded it. The most we could hope to do by the war was to destroy that threat, and then go on from there and do what we should have gone on to do--much of which, if we had done it in the first place, might have prevented that war. At least we could say to ourselves and to the universe, "We pledge that if we destroy this danger, then we will go on to do what we ought to be doing."

But this time, is there the satisfaction even of that kind of negative meaning? The very problem itself is much graver: the almost inevitably inconclusive result of a military venture between two giants such as now confront each other. Furthermore, I cannot say from my heart that there is any virtue in destroying a revolution which was inspired partly by our own, and which partly speaks for the otherwise unexpressed aspirations of a great deal of humanity. I cannot feel that there is even

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1. The first step in the process of the development of a new product is the identification of a market need. This is often done through market research, which can be conducted in a variety of ways, including surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The goal is to understand what customers want and need, and to identify any gaps in the current market.

[Faint handwritten notes, mostly illegible]

1. The first group of people who are interested in the study of the history of the United States are the people who are interested in the history of the United States.

1891

a negative meaning in a victory by us--by a reactionary America allied with the Vatican. I cannot believe that this conduces to edification.

So it looks as if we are in one of those hours in history where there is very little meaning in what's going on. Oh, there's plenty of event, lots of "business"--but it doesn't add up to very much. I think that we will stultify our minds and our souls if we try to match the magnitude of the happening with an interpretation equally grand in scale. I was talking with one of our graduates the other day, and he almost pleaded on this point--"Let us in so great an hour as this find a great meaning to match it!" But I had to say, "Well, as far as I am concerned, that's precisely our predicament, that there is no meaning to match it."

To be sure, we make up meanings; we talk about "the godlessness of our opponents", forgetting that their godlessness really adds up to secularity--a secularity which condemns us equally. Those of us in this enterprise are familiar with the fact that secularity is what we have been fighting for years in the name of Christianity; it does us no credit to talk about the godlessness of people who are in the same secularity. The words of St. Paul apply to us: "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, ... for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

Or, to talk about their totalitarianism--it ill becomes us in this eleventh hour to talk about the totalitarianism of those who oppose us, we who as a people were relatively complacent in the presence of a totalitarianism which was in the interests of an almost complete lack of human value, where it did not have anti-human disvalues. It is true that our great President understood about this totalitarianism and hated it with his soul; but our people did not--those very people who now tell you about "the totalitarian rascals in Russia." This grieves to the heart. These meanings are synthetic. They fit not well on our lips.

Therefore this is our problem, approached prophetically. Since man lives by meaning, since man lives not "by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"--and yet we cannot find a word--this is the counsel for the moment: Let us not strive for some trumped-up meaning to account for what we are doing when in our heart of hearts we know that we have stumbled into something which on the rational level is almost meaningless. Let us face our predicament and enter into it; let us wait on the Lord. That is all that is offered to us. God has not seen fit to hold before us some great, luminous meaning to inspire our deeds and to enlighten our hours; instead, he has called us into the dark. Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, let us fear no evil, because he is with us.

<p>What Judgment Is Before Us?</p>	<p>The second prophetic interpretation of this hour is that this is a day of judgment. (It is congenial to the prophets, when there is peace in the social order and a time of construction, to refer to the creativity of God, or to his long-suffering. When, however, trouble is what appears, we then think of judgment, lest our life be meaningless on its darker side, and lest the power of God be limited only to fair weather and happy hours.) What kind of a judgment is before us?</p>
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You may say, "Judgment is a meaning." Yes, but this is a transcendent meaning; this is a meaning in the soul of the Judge in the heavenly places, but not in the reason of man--only in the faith of man. Well, it is a judgment in that we are God's agent against the Russians in this hour. "Why should God have an agent against the Russians in this hour?" Well, because they have destroyed civil liberties at home and abroad; they are in the name of man, and nevertheless against man. (This is, of course, the mark of all idolatry.) Again, because of their lust for power, which may not be as immoderate as some people say, but is nevertheless very evident. Again, because the Communists have resorted to an exclusively economic interpretation of human affairs, both at home and abroad. Furthermore, because of their secular preoccupation; because of their Utopian illusions; and because of their human pride. "Behold this great Babylon I have built," said the pride of the past, and we can hear its echo in our ears nowadays: "Behold this great Communist Internationale we have built!" Because of the illusion of perfectionism in these people, and for many other such reasons, God has raised us up to be a rod of correction and judgment against the Russian people.

Is this also an hour of judgment because God has raised them up to judge us? Is it because we have liberty, but have not been as careful of security? Professor Tillich, our last lecturer, has some words here in his book, The Shaking of the Foundations, which are of interest. He says:

"At the beginning of our period we decided for freedom. It was a right decision; it created something new and great in history. But in that decision we excluded the securities, social and spiritual, without which man cannot live and grow. And now, in the old age of our period, the quest to sacrifice freedom for security splits every nation, and the whole world, with really daemonic power."

Is God judging us because all we talk about is liberty, and suspiciously veer away, in our public utterances, from the problem of security? Is God judging us because we have so little present sympathy with the necessary agrarian revolutions in countries like Hungary, where the Church owns so much property, and Poland, China, and India? Is it because, in the face of this need for an agrarian revolution (not industrial, because they are not ready for that), we nevertheless supported people like Chiang Kai-shek and Admiral Horthy, and colonial systems like that of the French? (In one instance--that of the Dutch--we were on the side of the angels, which, it might be added, is our own historic side.)

Is God against us, furthermore, because of the secularity of our day in this country? (This secularity is one of the major reasons why this enterprise of "Christianity and Modern Man" exists. You can't deny that it is real enough to account for us all being here!) Is God judging us because we in our way have been indulging in perfectionistic dreams--as, for example, when we speak with almost unmeasured pride of "the American way"?

Is this an hour of judgment? The prophet would suggest that it most assuredly is. God, who is above all peoples, who carries out his purposes through all, is serving himself in our day by both Russia and ourselves.

Our Salvation There is a third prophetic observation upon the problem in which we find ourselves, and that is an observation about the precariousness of our fate in the immediate future. This is where we talk a little bit about the "lethal possibilities" of the atomic bomb and the projected hydrogen bomb, and other such engines of destruction. Those who seem to know the most about these things (this time it's the expert and not the common man who is the alarmist!) seem to think that we have now a very real possibility of obliterating the human enterprise as such. If we do not literally and strictly destroy all men, at any rate we may reduce those who survive to a very much simplified and less complicated existence.

Sometimes we think this is all bosh. We take out our pipe and poke the tobacco down with our forefinger, and we hear the same old birds singing, and we say, "Oh, this is all twaddle!" And maybe it is--I hope so. But maybe it isn't twaddle; maybe the people who know the most about it are the ones who are the most alarmed, simply because they do know the most about it. At any rate, we have to face this problem; and if the prophetic outlook claims to have anything for us, it ought to have something for this kind of prospect. We ought at least to face it and then set it to one side. And this is the way we might proceed:

To begin with, this world of the atomic bomb, and none other, is the world which has been saved by the Incarnation and which for 2,000 years now has lain within a great act of salvation. This act of salvation is not something that remains to be done; it is done long since. Behind it is the prestige, the authority, the power of omnipotent God. Nothing can annul his deed; it is done.

We are saved in history; we are saved as historical. We are saved in this year of 1951 as we were saved in 1950 and as we shall be saved in 1952, if there is one. We are saved not only in these years, atomically considered, but we are saved in the interconnection of these years--the interconnection of 1950-51-52. We are saved as individuals and as individuals combined in America. We are saved as America, and as America vis-à-vis Russia; and they too are saved who live in Russia.

Here and now in this world we are all saved, and nothing can be done about it. That's the first thing. That's the basic statement, and every other statement is secondary and consequent to that; it is the foundation stone, which has been laid. Therefore we must say that no event--not even the termination of the entire human enterprise--can alter this in the slightest degree. The decree has gone forth, the deed has been done, and nothing that man can do can ever change it in the slightest way. The end of a human life (which we as pastors constantly deal with) does not for this family, or for that life, or for all of us, change in the slightest degree the meaning of life or the status of salvation. So the adding together of individual deaths--even though it is the death of us all in one final cataclysm--cannot change in the slightest degree the ultimate status of our world. Therefore, as we contemplate this possibility, we are not in despair about it because neither it nor anything else can change our basic affirmation.

We do not desire the atomic bomb. You may be surprised that I find it necessary to say that; but remember how the Freudians talk about the

"death-wish"; and I am sure that there is in much of modern thought a kind of unconscious wish really to do this and have one glorious, rosy explosion as at least a grand exit from something which was too much for the spirit of man. No, we do not desire it, at any subconscious level; we have no such death-wish because we are in the act of salvation.

Furthermore, because we do not think that this or any other event can change that act of salvation, we are free to contemplate the possibility that the human enterprise may be wiped out as a fact in a way that no other mentality can. If a man had an interest in keeping the human enterprise going (an illegitimate interest, I would have to say, because the human enterprise would itself have to be made the very definition of meaning), then he would have to rationalize this possibility, and evade it, and deny it; and if it happened, it would find him surprised because he had said it couldn't happen. The reason he said it couldn't happen was because he did not dare contemplate it; and the reason he did not dare contemplate it was because the stream of history was really his God.

But our God is not the stream of history; our God is God, who is the Lord of history, and who has saved it. Therefore we are free to look at the facts, to side with the experts, and to say, "It may very well happen." Because we have the prophetic point of view, we can be just as realistic as the experts. We can admit the possibility; and having admitted it, we can prepare ourselves for it, just as we sometimes prepare people for an imminent death (as I did this very evening).

And, because we admit the possibility, because we no longer live on illusions hereabouts, we can go ahead to mobilize ways of avoiding it. Furthermore, because we have a prophetic Christian outlook upon things, we will not spoil our mobilization by false moves engendered by despair or by terror.

Can We Hope? Finally, does the prophetic outlook have anything to say about hope in such an hour as this? This is too deep for optimism or pessimism, but we are people, and can we hope? Certainly we can. We have to face the possibility of the total destruction of the human enterprise, and we must entertain no illusions about this real possibility; but we are free to do everything we can to avoid it, not because it will destroy God, but because it will destroy some happy living in the world, under the sunshine of salvation--which is quite a different reason.

To begin with, we are not creatures of a mood of despair. We are free to hope because we don't have to be desperate. There is no virtue in despair for us; it cuts the other way--there is a virtue in hope. Therefore we are free to diagnose the real situation that is before us. What are the prospects and possibilities, really, now that we have committed our ways unto the Lord and we need to find there only what is there? What's under the shell in this shell game?

Well, we can say that this old world has had troubles before, and that there is a toughness to creation which is really quite marvelous; and maybe we ought to be thinking about that toughness nowadays, even in the midst of new and unprecedented challenges to it.

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In the second place, even though for the moment, despite the U.N. (and, indeed, because of its veto-ridden career), there is no great order in the world, no Christendom overarching us all, this does not mean that there is no order in the world. There is still a little order: family life is still mighty happy and pleasant; church life, cultural activities, enterprises such as schools within a country, still exist. Groups of countries have a certain amount of coming and going still; and ordered life can be found in many "islands" even though the whole world is no longer embraced in a system of order. You can hope in these orders and in their fulfillment.

Furthermore, this civilization itself may perhaps muddle through--even this civilization, let alone creation as a whole. We have all been proclaiming the imminent demise of this civilization so often and for so long that we are really not much interested in it any more; but it might be that some rags and remnants of it will be left even after this third crisis in a generation. But even if this one should go, there will be future civilizations, if the world and the human race are left. If we cannot hope in a very spectacular future for our own civilization, we can hope that after ours is gone more civilizations will arise on its mounds as the Mesopotamian cultures did on the mounds of their predecessors. St. Augustine looked forward to what turned out to be a very glittering and marvelous civilization, and in that way he was saved in hope.

God Will Fulfill But chiefly we hope, not in the toughness of creation, or in the little orders, or in our own civilization muddling through, or in the civilizations which shall succeed it; chiefly we hope in God, his character, his promises, his performances. Not that he guarantees us any special outcome and says, "Rest your hearts; hope on this." He does not do that. In fact, he has set us in a very uncertain time when we cannot put our finger on any very definite or secure hope; and it is in such an hour as this that we ought specially to trust him. Uncertain times like these are special times for manifesting him who is our hope; as St. Paul understood, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

In the character of God, and to some extent in these concrete things, we are permitted--yes, by the prophetic outlook we are enjoined--to hope. Hope is almost the greatest of the virtues; along with love and faith it is the greatest.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We shall reach the hopes which God holds for us, and which are our own hopes for ourselves. The most assured, relevant, and important prophetic word of all is that our hopes shall be fulfilled.
